

Scotland First



SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE
AND UNIONIST PARTY

contents

introduction	1
our seven commitments to you	2
putting Scotland First in a strong UK	3
creating wealth and jobs	4
providing a free education	8
putting patients first	12
making people feel safe	16
attacking drugs head on	20
protecting the rural community	24
revitalising communities	28

welcome



On May 1st 1997 the people of Scotland told us what they thought - we got it wrong.

They said we were out of touch. We didn't listen; that our decisions and policies had London stamped all over them, with little relevance, or sympathy, for the needs of the Scottish people.

As a result, our history is indelibly marked with the 1997 election defeat.

The defeat, however, was a turning point. It made us look at ourselves. It was time to face the criticisms and address them head on. It was now or never.

One of our immediate tasks was to find out what Scotland really thought of us. And, more importantly, what Scotland expected of us.

Since July 1998 we have held over five hundred 'listening' meetings to hear the views of over 15,000 people from all walks of life, from all over Scotland.

The result? The manifesto you see before you.

It gives me great pride to say that no other manifesto has ever been put together this way. It truly was **created for you, by you.**

Please feel free to read on. Whether you read it all, or whether you just dip in and out, you'll see that, while our core values and principles remain intact, this is a new party.

A party that is listening.

A party that has got back to grass roots.

A party that has risen to the challenge of devolution.

A party that is committed to putting Scotland First.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David McLetchie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David McLetchie

our seven commitments to you

- no new or higher taxes on Scots
- abolition of university tuition fees
- a full time nursery place for all 4 year olds
- zero tolerance for drug dealing and other serious crimes
- lift the beef-on-the-bone ban and ensure a fair deal for Scotland's farmers and fishermen
- introduce modern matrons into hospitals to improve patient care
- make the Parliament work for Scotland within the UK

we will

make the Parliament work for Scotland within the UK

extend devolution and decentralisation throughout Scotland

campaign for Glasgow to be the headquarters of the British - Irish Council

put Scotland First in a strong UK

Scottish Conservatives are totally committed to making a success of the Scottish Parliament. We are Scottish and British - proud to be both and proud of what our partnership in the United Kingdom has achieved over the last 300 years. It is quite simply the most successful political, economic and monetary union the world has known. Devolution requires a new language of Unionism that can capture the loyalty and enthusiasm of the people of Britain. It will also mean a new relationship between the constituent countries of the United Kingdom. This should be a true partnership.

Scottish Conservatives in the Scottish Parliament will play a positive role in developing the new constitutional framework of the United Kingdom. The Scottish Parliament has a key role to play in developing strong links with Westminster, the Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies and the institutions of the European Union. We will play a full part in the British - Irish Council and will campaign for its headquarters to be in Glasgow. In the same vein, we believe that the Royal Commission on the House of Lords should consider whether a reformed Upper House should include some direct representation for the countries of the United Kingdom. To mark the historic opening of the new Parliament by Her Majesty the Queen there should be a national holiday on 1st July. This will underline the importance of the occasion for the future of Scotland and enable the maximum number of our people to enjoy the ceremony.

A Decentralised Scottish Parliament

The new Scottish Parliament should not just benefit Edinburgh, as it is a Parliament for the whole of Scotland. We would decentralise many of its government departments to cities and towns around Scotland, as a way of bringing government closer to the people of Scotland. This would allay the fears in many parts of Scotland that the creation of a Scottish Parliament will lead to a concentration of power in Edinburgh to the detriment of the rest of the country.

For example, the department of Tourism and Culture could be located in Inverness, Industry and Transport in Glasgow, Agriculture in Perth, Environment in Stirling, Health in Dundee and Fisheries in Aberdeen. A hi-tech communications system should be put in place to make this dispersed network function efficiently.

To complement this, the Committees of the Scottish Parliament should be encouraged to sit in different parts of the country and hold public meetings at which local people can contribute ideas and question politicians.

"Why wasn't I told about the new taxes?"

labour has

taxed Scots by stealth
slashed spending on Scottish roads
damaged our road haulage industry with major hikes in fuel taxes
threatened motorists with extra taxes of £100 per month
cost Scotland a job every 20 minutes this year
introduced over 2,000 new rules and regulations for business
set Britain up for abolition of the pound

we will

oppose any new or higher taxes on Scots

increase spending on roads without introducing road tolls

give priority to Scottish business and job creation

lower business rates for traders in town centres and local communities

reduce red tape and bureaucratic interference

campaign for fair petrol prices throughout Scotland

fund Area Tourist Boards directly from the Scottish Tourist Board

fight to save the pound

create wealth and jobs

Scottish Conservatives stand for an enterprise economy which is the best way to ensure the prosperity of our people and high quality public services. Labour has squandered a strong economy by imposing new burdens on business and destroying jobs. Labour has made five basic blunders. They have raised taxes; introduced new regulations; spent too much because of their failure on welfare reform; attacked savings; and taken interest rates out of democratic control and given them to the Bank of England.

On top of this, Labour, supported by the SNP and Liberal Democrats, plans to abolish the pound, passing control of economic policy to unelected European bankers and bureaucrats who want to push our taxes up to their high levels.

A Low Tax Economy

We are determined to ensure that our people and businesses are not penalised by having to pay higher taxes than elsewhere in the UK.

Labour has burdened individuals and businesses with an array of new “stealth taxes” such as the windfall tax, increased national insurance, the pensions tax, increased petrol tax and the abolition of MIRAS and the married couples allowance.

Labour has a whole raft of new tax proposals that it would like to impose on Scots such as higher business rates, road tolls, a parking tax and a tourist tax.

Both the Scottish Nationalists and the Liberal Democrats would go even further. They both plan to use the Tartan Tax and make Scots pay a higher rate of income tax than people living in the rest of the UK. This will make the average Scottish family £250 a year worse off and, because of recent budget changes, it will hit the lowest paid particularly hard. In addition to the extra taxes, there will be an additional burden on business through the cost of administering the Tartan Tax. This has been estimated at £170 million by the Association of Scottish Life Offices.



Scottish
Conservatives stand
for an enterprise
economy to ensure
prosperity and
high quality
public services.

If the Scottish Nationalists ever achieved their aim of an isolated Scotland, our country would face a deficit of between £3 billion and £7 billion depending on Scotland's share of oil revenues. A recent independent study by Professor Kemp of Aberdeen University showed that SNP claims about the amount of oil revenue Scotland would receive are hopelessly optimistic and that our deficit would be far nearer £7 billion. This could only lead to reduced public spending, higher taxes and increased borrowing. In addition, isolation would cost 230,000 jobs and the SNP's determination to join the single currency would mean slashing public spending by at least £1 billion to meet the entry criteria. Scottish Conservatives will oppose any attempts to increase the tax burden on Scots.

Transport

Under the last Conservative Government, Scotland's roads and public transport saw vast improvements which we aim to build on for the 21st century. Scotland is a major exporter and high transport costs undermine the competitiveness of our businesses. Labour has already hit hauliers and motorists hard with increases in fuel taxes and vehicle excise duty and in the Scottish Parliament would go even further. Labour has plans for road tolls on trunk roads, city entry charges and parking taxes. Scottish Conservatives will oppose them all. We will campaign for fair petrol prices throughout Scotland. Additional taxes imposed by Labour on petrol and diesel have had a devastating effect on our

rural communities where the car is a necessity, not a luxury. The price of petrol in rural areas is already far higher than in urban areas, something Labour has done nothing about.

In Labour's first year in power, it raised £2 billion in tax from car users in Scotland, yet only spent £295 million on transport. Labour has slashed the roads budget that it inherited from us. We want a rolling programme of road improvements in the interests of safety and the development of our economy to include our planned upgrades of the A77/M77, A96, A1, M80, A828, the A75 Stranraer route and the M74 Glasgow extension.

We would also seek an end to the annuality of funding for roads to make it easier to plan for the future.

Creating Jobs

While we must continue to attract inward investment from overseas, we believe that Scottish Enterprise and the Local Enterprise Companies should place greater emphasis on assisting small and medium-sized businesses in Scotland.

The LECs should be given sole responsibility for economic development and training in their areas to end the present confusion caused by the split between them and local authorities. This would provide a more coherent structure to pursue long-term wealth creation and jobs.

Labour's record on jobs in Scotland is a disgrace: 15,000 job losses last year and 5,000 so far this year. Unemployment is up and there have been major

recent job losses at, amongst others, Viasystems, Wrangler, Lite-On, Volvo and Dawson International. Labour has added to the burdens of business by implementing the European Working Time Directive, which by the Government's own admission will add £2 billion to the costs of business and lead to further job losses.

In the past, we enjoyed success in getting young people into work. Once young people have their foot on the first rung of the ladder, it is possible to improve personal skills and build on them with vocational qualifications. Such jobs are better provided under the direction of business and industry rather than whatever approach is in vogue with the Government.

In addition, we would extend the principle of choice in training for young school leavers. All 16 - 18 year old school leavers who want it, should be given access to training or apprenticeships through a training voucher that could be presented to an employer or training provider of their choice. Traditional apprenticeships in the building trades should be part of this programme.

The education system must provide young people coming onto the jobs market with proficiency in the basic subjects, including communication skills. Close links between business and education must be fostered to ensure young people are fit for the world of work.

Small Businesses

Small businesses are essential to our future economic prosperity. It is vital that we do not stifle the entrepreneurial flair of our people with excessive regulation and bureaucracy. Scottish Conservatives will ensure that, in the Scottish Parliament, the emphasis is on removing unnecessary red tape rather than creating new regulations.

Labour will destroy the Uniform Business Rate. We will oppose this move, as we believe that the UBR has protected small businesses in Scotland from the excessive increases imposed by local authorities in the past and has created a level playing field for Scottish companies and their counterparts in the rest of the UK. This must not be lost.

We believe that there is a need to revitalise our town centres and local communities by attracting shops and businesses back. Partly, this means reversing some of Labour's damaging transport policies, but we

would also offer business rate relief to traders and small businesses in town centres and local communities.

Tourism

Tourism is one of our biggest employers and should be given its rightful place as one of Scotland's major industries.

Scottish Conservatives believe that there should be a Minister in the Trade and Industry team with responsibility for tourism.

Tourist boards currently suffer from the annual wrangling with local authorities for funding which makes strategic planning difficult for the industry. We would provide adequate core funding for the Area Tourist Boards directly from the Scottish Tourist Board. Where possible, funding would be set for a three year period to assist long-term planning.

We would review the marketing of Scotland abroad and look at the current relationship that exists between the British Tourist Authority and the Scottish Tourist Board to ensure that it works in the best interests of the industry in Scotland.

We would oppose any attempts by Labour or the other parties to impose a tourist tax or any other additional burdens on the industry which would have an adverse impact on visitor numbers and employment.

Scottish Conservatives would also initiate a review of Scottish Licensing Laws to simplify our existing arrangements and to encourage future investment.

Fighting to Save the Pound

We have already witnessed the damage done to Scottish business and industry following the Chancellor's decision to abdicate responsibility for interest rates to the Bank of England. The situation would be even worse if a European Central Bank was in charge of our day to day monetary affairs and would involve the abolition of Scottish bank notes. We want to keep zero rates of VAT on food, children's clothes and books and we want to keep our business taxes low. A decision on joining the Euro, which has enormous political as well as economic implications, should not be taken without the consent of the people and only after we have had an opportunity to assess whether it is in our best interests.

Scottish Conservatives will ensure that Scotland's voice is heard on this matter.

"How can I ever hope to pay my fees....?"

labour has

introduced £3,000 tuition fees for students
deprived parents of choice in nursery education
wasted £50 million on an English agenda to reduce class sizes
undermined the morale of the teaching profession

we will

abolish university tuition fees by introducing our Saltire Award

provide a full time nursery place for all four year olds with real choice for parents

employ specialist foreign language teachers for every primary school

remove schools from local authority control

develop after-school activities

support the reintroduction of school uniforms

provide a free education

Scottish Conservatives believe that education and training must enable everyone in our society to realise his or her full potential. This means guaranteeing a high quality of education for every child and encouraging life long learning for everyone.

Our policies are based on the principle that at every level - nursery, primary, secondary, further and higher education and training, the best way to ensure high standards is to provide real choice. At the last election, Labour promised to make education its number one priority. Labour has failed to deliver on its promise. It has betrayed students over tuition fees, undermined teacher morale and deprived parents of choice in nursery education.

Abolish Tuition Fees

Labour has betrayed students by introducing tuition fees of £1,000 per year for a three year course, despite specific pledges not to do so.

We will end tuition fees for Scottish students. We would replace them with a Saltire Award that will give students real choice as to the university they attend and ensure that the money goes directly to the higher education institution. At present, the money from tuition fees goes to the Government. The tuition fee is a tax on learning rather than a method of funding universities.

The Saltire Award will give every Scottish-domiciled student who has attained the minimum standard for University entrance a credit worth £1,000 per year. This would be redeemable at any university in the UK and would not be means tested.

We would also remove the anomaly of students from other parts of the UK having to pay the cost of a fourth year at a Scottish University.

Quality and Choice in Nursery Education

Labour took the dogmatic and ideological decision to deprive parents of the choice in nursery education that they enjoyed under the Conservatives. Parents now find that they have to accept the nursery place that their local authority gives them. This is typical of Labour's attitude, which is based on the belief that parents cannot be trusted to choose the nursery school best suited to their own children.

In contrast, the Scottish Conservatives will restore to parents the right to send their children to the nursery school of their choice, whether it is in the state, voluntary or private sector.

This will be done by giving every eligible family in Scotland a voucher equivalent to the value of a full time place for a four year old at a nursery school. At present, Labour's scheme only guarantees a part time place for four year olds. We would extend this by guaranteeing a full time place using the money set aside by Labour to provide a part time nursery place for all three year olds. This system would be flexible and could, for example, be used by parents for a part time place for a three year old and a part time place for a four year old.

The Right Start in Primary School

Our priority in primary schools is to ensure that children are taught the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic and communication skills as early as possible.

The £50 million that Labour is using to cut class sizes in Scottish primary schools could be better used to bring in specialists to teach foreign languages. This would work on the same lines as the teaching of music at present.

This would have the added advantage of reducing the current burden on teachers, allowing them to concentrate on the core subjects, as well as leaving more time for marking and for them to supervise after-school activities.

Labour's commitment to cut class sizes at the last election was a response to an English difficulty as average class sizes are not a problem in Scotland. We believe that the money would be better spent on tackling the problem of the over-crowded curriculum in primary schools, which means that some subjects do not have the time devoted to them that they require.

Real Devolution to Schools

Our schools must become centres of excellence and be judged on results. This means allowing them to attract more funds and to reflect the needs and aspirations of their communities. They need greater freedom to pursue different paths to excellence and to raise the status of teachers, so that they are, once more, respected as skilled and dedicated professionals.

Schools should no longer be managed by local authorities, but instead by Local School Boards named after the communities they serve. For example Hamilton School Board or Leith School Board, would manage a group of schools within their areas. Their members would include local Councillors, Head Teachers and representatives of individual school boards.

Local School Boards would be funded directly by the Scottish Parliament and they would be given their share of present council spending on the provision of central services. This could include the voluntary integration of schools in the private sector, such as the Rudolph Steiner and Waldorf Schools.

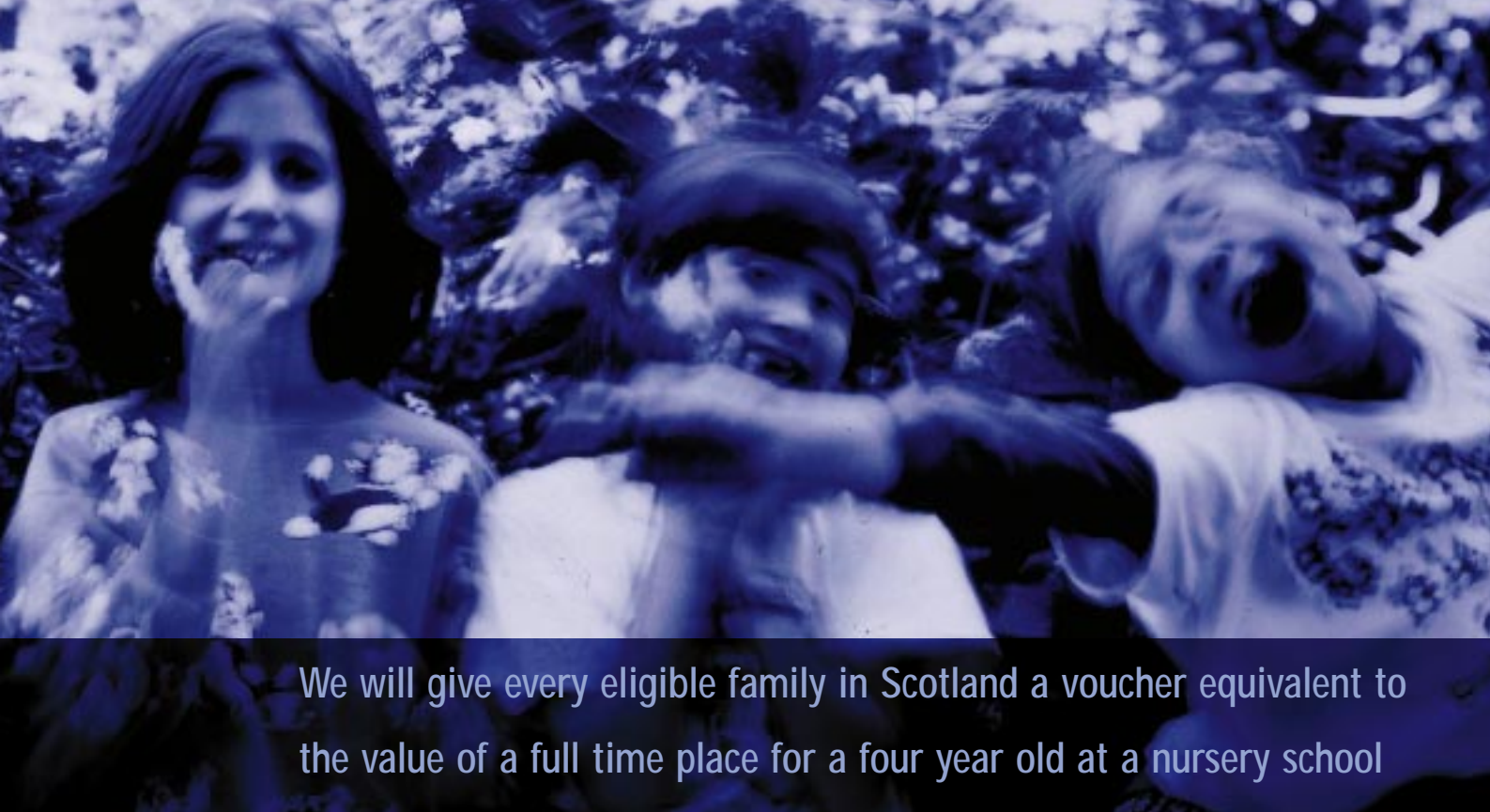
Local School Boards could appoint a school manager to take pressure off Head Teachers and would be able to share administrative costs and facilities and organise joint activities.

Local School Boards would be responsive to the needs of parents and local communities and would be the most effective way of raising standards in our schools.

Greater devolution also requires greater monitoring of standards centrally and we will legislate for the extension of the powers of the General Teaching Council and the establishment of an independent pay review body for teachers.

Better Discipline in Schools

Standards of discipline in our schools have to be



We will give every eligible family in Scotland a voucher equivalent to the value of a full time place for a four year old at a nursery school

tackled, as teaching has to be conducted in an environment conducive to learning.

Head Teachers will have responsibility for the hiring of staff and will have an incentive to appoint teachers who can maintain discipline in their classes. As it is such a crucial part of teaching, we would ensure that teacher appraisal by the GTC backed this up by placing greater emphasis on maintenance of discipline in class.

However, there is a growing problem in our schools of disruptive pupils who cannot be controlled by traditional punishments and are more than happy to be excluded or expelled from school.

We propose to introduce a system of constructive discipline in schools based around a new post of School Mentor. This member of staff would be trained for this new role which would combine two functions. The first would be the traditional guidance role of looking for ways of stimulating a disruptive pupil's interest in school as a way of enhancing the pupil's future career prospects.

The second role would be as the supervisor of a range of disciplinary measures, which could include the use of special units within schools, the greater use of detention and the suspension of privileges such as participation in after-school activities that the pupil enjoyed. The School Mentor would involve parents in this process, as without parental support

the enforcement of discipline becomes impossible. This twin-track approach would be aimed at keeping disruptive pupils in mainstream schooling and give them a real incentive to behave well.

Crucial to the maintenance of good discipline is a pupil's sense of pride in his or her school. Although it would be a matter for the individual school board to decide, we believe that schools should reflect the wish of most parents to see a return to school uniform for pupils as part of creating the right atmosphere within the school.

Sport and After-School Activities

We will address the problem of the decline in after-school activities. Through the agencies of the Scottish Sports Council and the Scottish Arts Council, we would use Lottery money to fund schemes for staff and parents in all primary and secondary schools in Scotland to enable them to coach school teams and individual pupils in a variety of sports and tutor other after-school activities such as music and drama.

We want to put regular PE lessons back on the school curriculum for all pupils as part of a wider strategy to improve the health of our young people.

"I feel let down by Labour..."



labour has

fiddled the waiting list figures while more patients wait to get on the list
reduced morale in the NHS to an all-time low
introduced expensive new tiers of bureaucracy
centralised control and taken power away from your GP
created a crisis in NHS Accident and Emergency Departments

we will

introduce modern matrons into our hospitals

reduce waiting times for patients

abolish Health Boards, Primary Care Trusts and GP Co-ops

devolve decision making and responsibility to your local GP surgery

provide new investment for the expansion of local health services

make our hospitals specialist centres of excellence

put patients first

Scottish Conservatives are committed to the National Health Service. We helped to create the NHS and we developed it during our periods in Government which account for two thirds of the life of the NHS. We are committed to an NHS which is free at the point of need and provides high standards of health care for our people.

We will put the needs of patients back at the heart of the NHS. This means giving greater power to local GPs so that they can tailor their services to meet the needs of their patients.

We will respond to patients' wishes for local medical care by providing extra money, released by stripping away layers of bureaucracy, to develop the range of services that they can receive locally through GPs and local Community Health Trusts.

To complement this, we will develop our major hospitals into centres of medical excellence at the cutting edge of research, innovation and technology. In opposition, Labour promised the earth to NHS staff and patients, but it has spectacularly failed to deliver. In Government, Labour has shown that it cares more about political control, than it does about patient care. This has led to morale within the service reaching an all-time low.

Waiting times have increased under Labour. Labour has thrown money at waiting lists in an attempt to meet its discredited manifesto pledge. This ignores the fact that the length of time patients have to wait for treatment is far more important.

Labour's obsession with waiting lists has distorted clinical priorities in our health service and led to a serious mis-allocation of resources. This has prevented staff within the service from deciding where to spend money in the best interests of patients.

Labour's mismanagement of the NHS has led to a crisis in the service, with patients in Accident and Emergency Departments waiting for hours for treatment. Dr Brian Potter, the Scottish Secretary of the BMA, has condemned the management of the NHS in Scotland as being in "an unbelievably awful state".



We helped create the NHS and we developed it during our periods in government which account for two thirds of the life of the NHS.

A Fair Deal for NHS Staff

Labour has undermined morale in the NHS, as staff are having to respond to Labour's politically-motivated health agenda.

We will address this issue by setting up a clinician-led working party to examine morale and working issues within the NHS.

We need to improve working conditions to ensure that the retention of existing staff is easier and that experienced staff are encouraged to return. This means providing more NHS crèches and pre-five education for the children of NHS staff.

We will end the uncertainty within the NHS about pay by retaining a UK health service with pay rates for doctors and nurses determined by an independent pay review body.

We want to see the nursing profession grow both clinically and professionally, with specialist nurses in hospitals and nurse practitioners in local surgeries.

We will introduce modern matrons into hospital wards to ensure that there is a visible leader on the ward to whom patients can go with problems and concerns. This will improve patient care and provide an enhanced career structure for nurses.

Less Bureaucracy

Labour promised to reduce bureaucracy within the NHS. Instead, it has created GP Co-ops and new Primary Care Trusts - expensive new layers of bureaucracy that will take power away from local GPs and reduce the amount of money available to spend on patients.

We will reverse this damaging trend as we are committed to reducing unnecessary bureaucracy to ensure that as much money as possible is put into treating patients.

Although Health Boards have, in the past, performed an important role in planning services for their areas, we believe that the new Parliament should take over the overall strategic planning and allocation of health service resources for Scotland. This would be done through the Minister for Health and a Parliamentary Standing Committee, with the administrative functions carried out by the Common Services Agency. The regulatory and professional bodies would be fully consulted on all decisions.

We will therefore remove Health Boards and Labour's new GP Co-operatives and Primary Care Trusts. The money saved will be invested in improving local health care and modernising our hospitals.

Better Local Health Care

Scottish Conservatives believe that, whenever possible, health services should be provided at a local level that is convenient to patients.

By removing Labour's large, new GP Co-operatives and Primary Care Trusts, we are putting the local GP surgery back at the centre of the NHS. We will use telemedicine to ensure that people living in remote areas of Scotland have easy access to our centres of medical excellence.

GPs would be allocated budgets on the basis of the number of patients on their list with a formula built-in to take account of the health needs of differing parts of Scotland. This would give local surgeries the freedom to deliver local health care for their patients. Local surgeries should be free to merge their budgets and expand the range of services offered.

We would use the money saved from reducing bureaucracy to invest in an expansion of local health services. This would mean more money for local, community hospitals which would help to reduce the problem of bed blocking in our large hospitals by allowing patients to move back to local hospitals for post-operative care.

The bulk of medical care would then be provided at a local level, but if specialist hospital care was required, GPs would arrange this for their patients.

Excellence in Our Hospitals

Our hospitals must become centres of excellence. As well as providing those medical services that cannot be provided locally, they must expand their crucial research and education functions. We would put real investment from the savings made from reducing bureaucracy into modernising our hospitals.

Professionals within hospitals should have a greater role in the management of our NHS Trusts and

there should be greater clinical representation on Trust Boards. This would have the added advantage of taking politics out of the running of our health service.

Public Health

We will improve public and dental health in Scotland by supporting the work of the Health Education Board for Scotland. HEBS will work in conjunction with pilot Community Health Trusts, local surgeries, clusters of schools and local authority leisure facilities on innovative local schemes to improve the health of Scotland, recognising that the environment people live in affects their health.

We remain committed to national target setting for the treatment of chronic heart disease, cancer, strokes and the management of mental health.

Local GP surgeries have done a lot to improve preventative care. With the greater budgets and freedom that we intend to give them they will be able to develop these local initiatives further.

However, there is also a role for patients in taking greater responsibility for their own health.

Community Care

Community Care must reflect the wishes and choices of patients. This means creating a real partnership between the public and private sectors as private nursing homes can often provide a higher standard of care at lower cost than those in the public sector.

At present, the division of responsibilities between local authorities and the Health Service for the delivery of health-related social services causes considerable problems. We would propose the setting up of pilot Community Health Trusts drawing in NHS primary care, social services, voluntary organisations and churches.

"I'm too afraid to go out at night..."



labour has

talked and not acted on crime
cut funding for the victims of crime
reduced police numbers in Scotland
let criminals off lightly

we will

show zero tolerance of crime

- ensure compassion for the victims of crime
- maintain our local Police Forces
- restore honesty in sentencing
- introduce a new crime of home violation
- enhance crime prevention schemes

make people feel safe

For Scottish Conservatives, fighting crime has always been a top priority. The rule of law and good order are the essential foundations upon which all else is built. A decent, civilised society is one in which people can go about their everyday lives without fear and feel secure in their own homes. To this end, we will introduce a new, indictable crime of Home Violation. This would replace the current law on house breaking and would properly recognise both the severity of this crime and the trauma that it causes to its victims. Scottish Conservatives are committed to re-establishing the public's faith in all parts of our Criminal Justice System. This can only mean zero tolerance of crime.

Whilst respecting the independence of the law officers as the head of the system of public prosecution, we will introduce greater accountability in relation to their stewardship of the administrative resources of the system. This will take the form of a monthly legal question time at which the Lord Advocate can be questioned by Members of the Scottish Parliament. Our record on law and order in Government proves our commitment to creating a safer society. Increased resources for the Police, falling levels of crime, new crime prevention measures such as Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and CCTV cameras, a tough sentencing policy, waging war against the evil of drugs - these were the features of the last Conservative Government in action.

Labour promised it would be "tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime". Its performance since the election has shown this to be all talk and no substance. Labour has cut the number of Police Officers in Scotland, let criminals off with soft sentences and betrayed the innocent victims of crime.

We aim to reverse the damaging trends established by this Labour Government and seek to achieve a society in which only criminals live in fear.

Compassion for the Victims of Crime

Labour has shamefully cut the funding for Victim Support Scotland, making a mockery of their manifesto pledge to help the victims of crime “too often neglected by the criminal justice system”. In Government, we increased funding for the victims of crime and we would restore the financial help that Labour has neglected to give.

We will ensure that the Criminal Justice System serves the interests of the victims of crime. In cases of serious sexual offences, everything will be done to make the legal process as painless as possible for the victim. This would include such measures as giving the victim the right to give evidence over a video link and assigning a special Victim Liaison Officer in the Procurator Fiscal’s office who would act as a link between the victim and the prosecuting authorities. Victims will be advised of the progress and outcome of their cases and, if the accused is found guilty, the victim will have the right to submit a Victim Impact Statement before sentencing. If proceedings are not taken or are dropped, they will be told why that has happened.

We will ensure that victims are given the option to be advised, in advance, of their offender’s release date from prison and it will become an offence for those convicted of serious sexual offences to contact their victims, in any way for any reason, without the prior written consent of their victims.

Support for Local Police Forces

The number of Police Officers in Scotland is falling under this Labour Government.

We are committed to providing the Scottish Police Force with the necessary money and manpower to tackle crime effectively and to the concept of locally-based Police Forces. These forces must be locally accountable and capable of responding to local needs though we will continue to encourage the different Police Forces to share common services such as training, DNA testing and computerised fingerprinting.

Public confidence in the Police is crucial in the fight against crime. The best way to achieve this is high profile policing, which means more officers on the

street and, if necessary, an increase in the number of special constables.

Honesty in Sentencing

The Criminal Justice System must be considered in its entirety. There is no point in detecting crime if prosecutions are dropped, cases are dragged out and sentences do not match the gravity of the crime. Labour has undermined the public’s confidence in the justice system, failing to give it the priority it deserves. Up to 40% of prosecutions are being shelved and others downgraded to lower courts in the interests of saving money. Many serious cases are now being dealt with by fiscal fines which are easily abused and don’t appear on offenders’ records. This allows them to appear in court later as first offenders.

Scottish Conservatives will restore public confidence in the justice system by ensuring that it is swift, sure and fair, punishing the guilty whilst protecting the innocent.

We will set up a Parliamentary Committee to consider and review all aspects of the system including funding, administrative disposals such as fiscal fines and sentencing policy, including the extension of mandatory sentencing. The aim would be to achieve greater consistency in disposals and sentencing, a better public understanding of sentencing policy and ensure that the punishment fits the crime.

Honesty in sentencing must be restored by ending automatic remission for serious offences. Victims and their families must know that the sentence they hear in court is what the offender will serve. Prisoners should have to earn remission through good behaviour.

We believe that for serious offences prison works. To protect the public, those guilty of repeated serious offences should be imprisoned for life: for these criminals it would be “two strikes and you’re out”. For other offenders, we favour greater use of meaningful non-custodial sentences, such as electronic tagging and community service. However, offenders working on community service projects should wear uniforms as a visible deterrent to others.

Any violation of tagging or community service would mean an automatic jail sentence.

Preventing Crime

Everyone in the community has a responsibility to help to deter crime.

In Government, Scottish Conservatives pioneered community involvement in the prevention of crime through Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and the use

of Closed Circuit Television Cameras.

We would look at ways of increasing the coverage of Neighbourhood Watch and CCTV to address the problem of crime moving to areas which are not presently covered.

Where new housing developments are planned, we will ensure that there is consultation between builders and the Police concerning crime prevention measures.



We aim to reverse the damaging trends established by this labour government and seek to achieve a society where only criminals live in fear.

"It's scary at school with all the drugs..."



labour has

**failed to deal with the drugs problem
provided no new money for extra drugs squad officers**

we will

show zero tolerance of drug abuse and drug dealers

develop a national strategy for tackling the drugs menace

allow no bail for accused drug dealers

establish minimum sentences for convicted dealers

ensure fast-track prosecution of suspected dealers

expand rehabilitation facilities

extend drugs education in schools

attack drugs head on

Drug abuse threatens the very fabric of our society. It destroys lives and tears families apart; it leads to widespread and recurring crime and to the disintegration of communities.

Scottish Conservatives recognise that drug abuse is a multi-faceted problem which crosses the boundaries of law and order, health and education. Each aspect must be addressed as part of a clear, co-ordinated national strategy with, as its long-term objective, the creation of a drug-free Scotland. This would be led by a Minister in the Scottish Parliament with specific responsibility for drugs policy. The Minister would work with a Scottish Parliamentary Committee and would implement and co-ordinate policy through the relevant agencies.

Labour has failed to give this issue the priority and resources which it merits.

Donald Dewar promised to provide extra drugs squad officers attached to local Police Forces, but like so many of Labour's promises it was a hollow one. No new money was provided to fund these extra officers and Police Boards are expected to find the money out of their already tightly-squeezed budgets. The promise of extra Police Officers to tackle drugs will, therefore, not be met.

Drug abuse threatens the very fabric of our society. It destroys lives and tears families apart.

Law and Order

We will overhaul the way the law and legal system deal with serious drug offences by ensuring fast-track prosecution of suspected dealers; abolishing the right to bail for those charged with dealing and related offences; strengthening the law in relation to the seizure and confiscation of assets suspected of being derived from drug dealing; and by imposing minimum prison sentences for convicted drug dealers.

Judges should be given special training in relation to drug problems. They will be given the power to refer convicted drug abusers to a rehabilitation centre, but breach of a Rehabilitation Order would lead automatically to a return court appearance for alternative sentencing.

We will develop Rehabilitation Units within prisons and promote zero tolerance of drug abuse in prisons.



We will introduce more regular drugs tests on prisoners, and abusers will be relocated to the Rehabilitation Unit. Those convicted of smuggling controlled drugs into a prison will face a minimum prison sentence of 3 years.

Health and Education

We will encourage the formation of a national voluntary support agency, along the lines of Alcoholics Anonymous, to counsel and provide support and advice to addicts and to their families. We shall seek ways of extending community-based drug rehabilitation facilities. By making far more effective use of existing resources and allocating money raised from asset confiscation to the budget for implementing the National Drugs Strategy, we would expand the crucial role of the voluntary sector who have much to contribute towards tackling the menace of drugs. We would encourage a partnership

amongst Local Authorities, the Police, Local Health Centres, schools and rehabilitation centres to share advice and information and to liaise in relation to drugs education programmes for the whole community.

We would set up a working party to investigate and report on the effectiveness of Methadone as part of a harm-reduction programme.

Every school should provide drugs education to its pupils. Every secondary school in Scotland should appoint a Drugs Education Officer from amongst its staff who would be given suitable training and be responsible for liaison between the school and local agencies.

We will support our strategy to address the drugs problem among young people and promote a healthy lifestyle by encouraging participation in sport through youth clubs and other community-based organisations.

Drug abuse must be addressed as part of a clear, co-ordinated national strategy with, as its long-term objective, the creation of a drug-free Scotland.

"I want to be able to continue farming..."



labour has

created a crisis in Scottish agriculture

banned beef-on-the-bone

sold out Scotland's fishermen

sneered at public concern about Genetically Modified foods

shown no understanding of the rural economy or way of life

we will

ensure Scotland's farmers and fishermen get a fair deal

lift the ridiculous beef-on-the-bone ban

work to end the current arrangements on the Common Fisheries Policy

oppose a new rates burden on agricultural or forestry land

resist compulsory land confiscation

oppose proposals to put VAT on food

protect the rural community

Scottish Conservatives understand that diversity is one of Scotland's defining characteristics as a country. We cherish this and will continue to defend our rural communities and way of life. Labour is completely out of touch with the countryside and neither understands nor cares about the rural way of life or the rural economy. This is not surprising as Labour's support is concentrated in urban areas and Labour has attempted to impose its own urban values on the countryside. Labour is responsible for a crisis in Scottish agriculture and has totally failed to defend the interests of Scottish fishermen in Europe, preferring to avoid offending its friends in other left wing EU Governments.

A Fair Deal for Farmers

Labour is responsible for an unprecedented crisis in Scottish farming. Farm incomes have plummeted by 98% since our last year in Government, with Scotland being hit harder than the rest of the UK. The average Scottish farm now has a net income of only £416, compared to £20,564 in 1996.

Labour has made the situation even worse by piling new burdens onto our farmers in the form of red tape and increased costs. Equivalent costs are not being borne by farmers in other EU countries. To top it all, Labour introduced its ridiculous beef-on-the-bone ban, at a time when beef farmers are still reeling from the effects of the BSE crisis. We would lift this ban immediately. We would also ensure that EU Inspectors were invited to look at abattoirs in Scotland and provide marketing support to help restore our beef exports. Labour has neglected this. Scottish Conservatives believe that a strong farming and crofting industry underpins our rural communities and must continue to do so in the future.

We will push for a powerful Agricultural Committee to be set up in the Scottish Parliament to scrutinise any decisions that are taken which affect the industry.

With many farmers' incomes now dependent on subsidy payments, we will introduce a sensible appeals procedure, with a built-in time limit, to deal with any disputes.

Scottish farmers must enjoy equal treatment to those in other EU countries and should not be subject to burdens that are not imposed on their European counterparts.

Pig and poultry farming in Scotland has been damaged by the import of meat into this country that is produced in conditions, and using methods, that are not allowed here. We will campaign to stop this. Supermarkets have an important role in this respect and we will encourage them to introduce animal welfare codes to inform consumers of superior standards of meat production. Labelling should also be accurate and we will end the practice of meat being labelled as Scottish when it is produced abroad and only processed here.

Scottish Conservatives would like to see a closer link between farmgate prices and prices on the supermarket shelf, particularly at a time of falling commodity prices. We will encourage support for our farmers by greater use of local farm produce in schools, prisons and hospitals.

The extension of co-operation will be crucial to the recovery of the Scottish farming industry. Scottish Conservatives will explore different methods of funding for co-operative ventures to improve economic stability in farming communities.

Co-operation in marketing initiatives for Scottish products at home and abroad will be particularly important.

As farm subsidy is progressively reduced, Scottish Conservatives will argue for targeted support for marginal and upland farmers and recognition of the role farmers play in improving our environment.

Supporting Scotland's Fishing Industries

Labour has failed to stand up for Scottish fishermen in Europe on crucial issues such as quota hopping and the application of EU Working Time Rules to the fishing industry.

This is because Labour is too afraid of upsetting its friends in other left wing EU Governments to defend a vital Scottish interest.

The Nationalists have nothing to offer Scotland's fishermen, other than decline, misery and hardship. Their headlong rush to be ruled from Brussels will result in more foreign boats plundering our waters.

The consequences will be ever smaller quotas for our fishermen, together with more regulation and bureaucracy imposed against their will. As an

independent country within the EU, we would have minimal influence. As part of the UK, we are one of the major EU countries and Scottish Conservatives will use that to further the interests of our fishermen. The Scottish Conservatives believe that a completely new approach to fisheries policy is needed and our top priority is to secure a fair deal for Scottish fishermen.

We have consulted widely and recognise that our fishermen face ever-increasing pressure from falling quotas and quota hopping, while the conservation of fish stocks is being undermined by the large amount of dead fish that are returned to the sea. We will work to end the current CFP arrangements which are failing our fishermen.

In 2002, matters will be made worse when the derogation allowing our fishermen the exclusive right to fish in our own historic waters will come to an end. This is not acceptable and we will work for a permanent settlement in the interests of Scottish fishermen.

Fishermen must have more say in fishing policy. This means the CFP must be changed to devolve power to national and regional levels. This would give our local fishing industries control over the stock of fisheries, while recognising the traditional rights of other countries.

Our intention is, therefore, to establish national control over our own waters, for example by zonal or coastal management.

We recognise the current problems of the salmon farming industry because of the problem of ISA. Labour has failed to do anything to address the problems of the disease spreading further and we would put a proper emergency plan in place. We would also review the present compensation arrangements, which do not command the support of the industry.

Scottish Conservatives will address the threat to the fish processing industry in Scotland caused by predicted increases in water charges to comply with EU pollution regulations. We do not believe that high costs for low environmental benefit can be justified and would apply the principle of BATNEEC in this case.

Higher Food Standards

Scottish Conservatives support the principle of a Food Standards Agency as a means of guaranteeing



high standards of food for consumers. However, it must not discriminate against the Scottish farmer. This means a single standard across the whole of the UK or ideally across the whole of the European Union.

We do not agree with the flat rate levy that Labour has proposed to fund the new agency, as it cannot be right for small local shops to pay the same as supermarkets. Nor do we believe, as some do, that the new agency should be paid for by levying VAT on food.

We will demand that the agency applies the same standards to foreign produce as it does to our own to eliminate unfair competition.

Genetically Modified Food

Labour has failed to allay public concerns about GM food and there is a growing suspicion that its decisions have been influenced by the closeness of members of the Labour Government to the big companies producing these crops.

While the Scottish Conservatives are not opposed, in principle, to the release of GM crops, we believe that there should be a 3 year moratorium on the commercial release of these crops. This will allow time for studies on their impact, particularly on the environment, to be examined. For those GM foods already released, the public should be given accurate information about the contents of what they are eating through clear labelling.

Land Reform

Scottish Conservatives accept that a measure of land reform is desirable, but it should not be a legislative priority for the Scottish Parliament. If the Parliament has time and resources to spend on the problems of rural Scotland, then it should be urgently addressing the crisis in Scottish farming.

The land reform agenda of both Labour and the SNP is driven by a few specific problems with poor land management, almost exclusively in the north-west Highlands. There is very little evidence of any real problems in the rest of Scotland. The whole

programme is politically-driven rather than a serious attempt to address the problems facing rural Scotland.

We see no need for Locality Land Councils, as proposed by the Nationalists, as they would add an unnecessary tier of bureaucracy and stifle much-needed development in rural areas. Without an interest in the economic viability of land, they would have power without responsibility.

Any reform must emphasise the voluntary approach, with encouragement given to consultation between landowners and local communities. Above all, there should be no extension to the power of the state to interfere with private rights of ownership and enjoyment of land. Increasing state interference will simply make ownership of land less attractive to private individuals, leading to loss of investment and local employment opportunities. Similarly, there should be no increase in compulsory purchase powers and no ban on foreign ownership of land. Where possible, the State should divest itself of existing land holdings. Our priority is to see current levels of employment in rural areas maintained and preferably enhanced. This can best be done through simplifying our restrictive planning laws to permit sustainable development in rural areas.

We will oppose any attempts to introduce land taxation or reintroduce sporting or agricultural rates as the economics of rural Scotland do not provide sufficient income to meet these additional costs. However, we will support specific land reform to update the feudal system of land ownership; reform agricultural tenancies and modernise crofting law. We will also support a balanced approach to the reform of access legislation.

Forestry

A better road infrastructure is required for timber extraction, as well as increased use of the rail network. The private sector would be expected to make an appropriate contribution to these improvements.

"I can't stand the bureaucracy of the council..."



labour has

increased centralisation and state control
a history of sleaze and cronyism in local government
mismanaged DLOs causing debts of over £10 million
run up huge housing debts

created more bureaucracy and interference in our everyday lives

we will

give real power to communities

advocate the direct election of Lord Provosts and Provosts

promote employee buy outs of DLOs

give control of housing to local communities

ensure a clean, healthy environment

create an open, compassionate society

revitalise communities

Scottish Conservatives understand that revitalising our communities means a smaller central state and less central control.

We need to devolve real power to individuals, families and communities to give them far more responsibility for their own lives.

The record of the Labour Government shows its obsession with greater centralisation and control of every area of our lives. When Labour talks about partnership, it is not a partnership between people or between real communities; for Labour one of the partners will always be the State.

Accountable Local Government

Too many Councils in Scotland are failing their communities. In many parts of Scotland, Labour in Local Government means sleaze, mismanagement and cronyism. In many cases, Councils run by the Nationalists, the Liberal Democrats and Independents are not much better and their local policies have led to huge DLO debts.

A priority for Scottish Conservatives is to restore public confidence in our Councils which must be truly accountable to their communities and able to deliver good local services giving value for money. To ensure this, Councils will be required to prepare an Annual Report for their electorate and the Scottish Parliament on their activities, successes, failures, problems and plans for the following year. This report will require to present a true and fair account of their affairs as assessed by the Local Government Ombudsman whose role will be enhanced accordingly.

We believe that greater local accountability could be achieved by the introduction of directly-elected Provosts and a Cabinet System to replace the present cumbersome committee structure. The Cabinet would be chosen by the Provost and could include people drawn from within the Council or from outside. The Provost and Cabinet would present budgets and service delivery plans to Councils of directly-elected ward Councillors.

Councillors would act as advocates for their wards and be accountable to them. Collectively, they would scrutinise the activity of the Cabinet through a system of select committees. This would bring a more professional approach to the running of our local authorities.

We would propose that the Scottish Parliament set up a cross party Standing Committee to consider this and other options for the future structure and funding of Local Government. This would include the future role of Community Councils.

We will promote employee buy outs of Council DLOs and DSOs to allow them to compete outside the public sector. This would create new opportunities for these employees to run their companies profitably in the private sector and so improve their own pay and conditions, as well as their long-term job security. It would also stop the council taxpayer

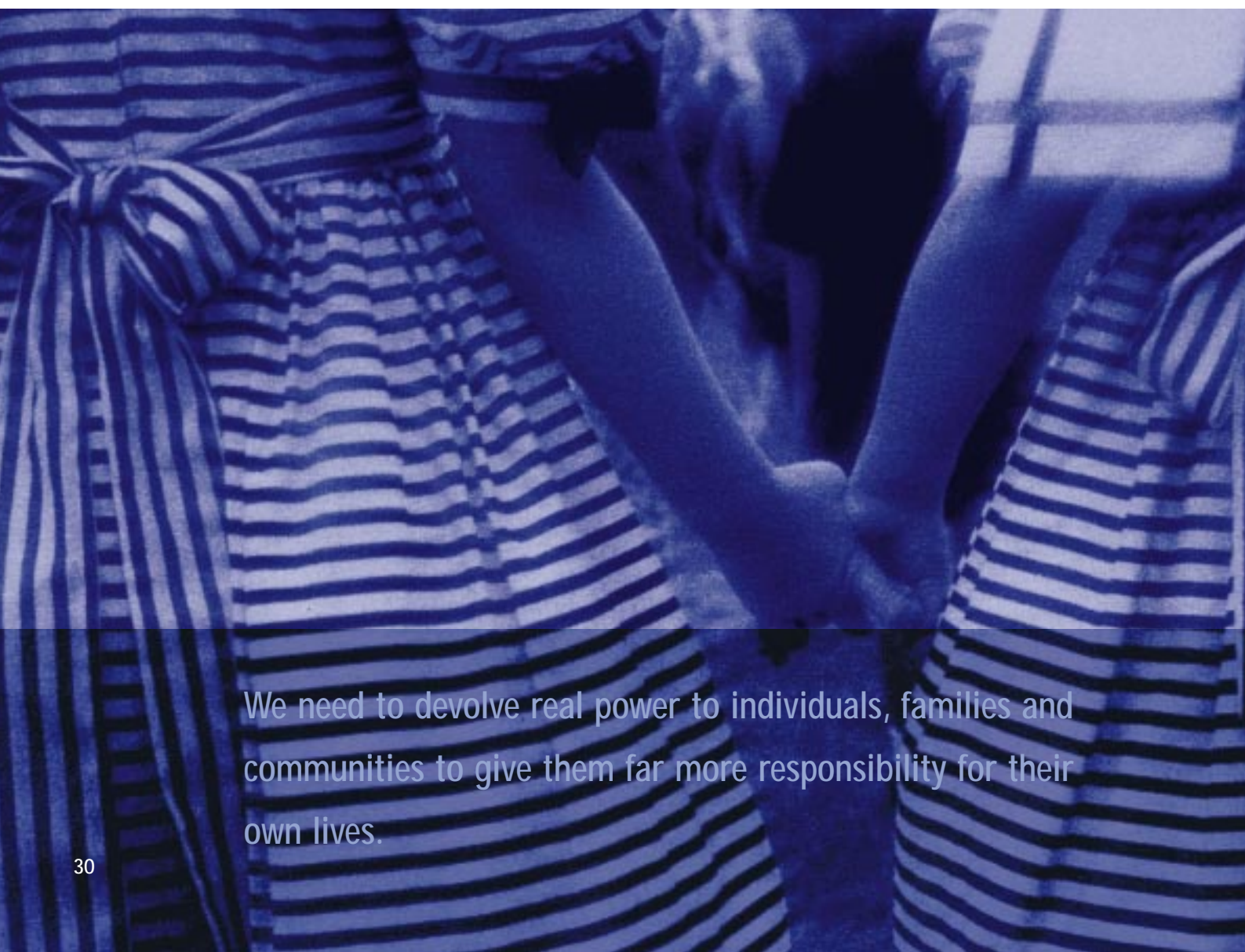
from having to pick up the tab for DLO debts arising from mismanagement.

An End to Council Housing

Labour in local government has failed the council tenant. Much of Scotland's council housing stock is crumbling and new investment is desperately needed. Mismanagement by Labour councils has led to £40 million of rent arrears, massive housing debt and the irony of long waiting lists and large numbers of empty houses.

Under the Scottish Conservatives, home ownership in Scotland increased from 35% in 1979 to over 60% today and we will continue to encourage the extension of home ownership, as there are still many people in Scotland who would like the opportunity to own their own home.

To improve the standard of housing for everyone in



We need to devolve real power to individuals, families and communities to give them far more responsibility for their own lives.

Scotland, we must devolve control of housing from Councils to local housing associations, housing co-operatives or a range of other providers. This would give tenants a real choice of landlord and a real say in the management of their homes. It would also bring in private sector investment to assist in necessary repair and renovation projects.

We would support a system of stock transfers running in tandem with debt reduction.

The prospect of an end to council housing is one that should be welcomed, as it has been characterised by unsympathetic and unresponsive bureaucracy, by disastrous architectural experiments and by financial waste on a massive scale.

Council tenants deserve better than this. They need managements that will face up to their responsibilities to control, and if need be, evict anti-social and disruptive tenants. This is a responsibility that too many Councils have abdicated in the past. In extreme cases, we would propose that anti-social tenants should be placed in half-way houses to protect their neighbours from noise and nuisance.

Special Needs Housing

We would encourage local housing providers to adapt houses specifically for elderly and disabled people. This will be done through grants and a requirement to provide a minimum of 5% of sheltered houses in any new development. This will ensure that elderly and disabled people are included in mainstream housing to encourage a proper mix within a neighbourhood.

Homelessness

We would address the complex issue of homelessness through the extension of the Rough Sleepers Initiative and would put more money into medium-term supported accommodation to end the vicious cycle of homelessness.

A Clean, Healthy Environment

Environmental protection is crucial to the renewal of our communities and cannot be left entirely to Government, as individuals and communities have a

responsibility to preserve their local environment. The key is an environmental strategy that balances a clean environment with economic development. This should be done by building on the principle that the polluter should pay.

We will ensure that there is close liaison between Holyrood, Westminster and Brussels as pollution knows no boundaries and it is only by working together that we can protect our environment.

A clean environment can only be achieved through economic growth to pay for “green” measures. We will resist excessive regulations and high taxes that would harm our prosperity, while seeking to promote sustainable development.

We will support measures that harness the diverse sources of energy that we have in Scotland, including renewable and nuclear energy.

Energy efficiency should be promoted and we would like to see local pilot schemes to explore the use of Combined Heat and Power as an environmentally friendly way of tackling fuel poverty. This would be linked to our strategy of transferring housing to local housing associations and would help to protect vulnerable households from the effects of cold and dampness.

The Scottish countryside is a national asset that is vital to our tourist industry. We will continue to support the work done by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency to protect our environment and ensure that they have the necessary funding. We believe that they should retain their independence but be fully accountable to the Scottish Parliament.

We will strengthen policies to protect the Green Belt around our cities and prevent “ribbon development”. However, we will ease planning restrictions in rural areas to allow small-scale new housing developments which are badly needed in these areas.

In urban areas, we will seek to preserve green, open spaces which Labour Councils have been too ready to sell to developers. We are also committed to the renewal of degraded land and brownfield sites.

Arts & Culture

We will support a cultural strategy that promotes Arts and Culture in Scotland and develops links with the tourist industry. We believe that this strategy should continue to be led by arm's length bodies such as the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Sports Council, as we do not want to see the politicisation of these areas.

Development of the arts and culture in Scotland should be decentralised with lottery money going to community projects. Labour is taking money away from such projects and putting it into its own pet schemes.

We will ensure that the Gaelic language and culture continues to receive a fair level of funding, building on our record in Government.

We would also like to see greater emphasis on music, drama and the arts in our schools by providing a bank of musical instruments which could be loaned to pupils anywhere in Scotland and the extension of the use of specialist teachers in these subjects.

We would support the setting up of a Venture Capital Fund to fund the arts in Scotland and we believe that successful projects that have benefited from taxpayers' money should put a percentage of their profits back into the Arts Council to fund future projects.

As the Party that set up Scottish Screen, we would continue to give strong support to its work to help the highly successful Scottish film industry.

An Open, Compassionate Society

Scottish Conservatives will ensure that the Scotland of the future is a society with no walls built around race or sex or class or faith. It must be fully open to all its members.

People must be treated on the basis of merit and not background. Access must be universal, with no special status or special rules for any group. There must be no jobs or houses denied to people because

of their sex, race or religious beliefs.

We must enable disabled people to participate fully in society. We will push for the Scottish Parliament to appoint a Minister for Disabled People and set up a Disability Task Force. The aim of the task force would be to focus minds and attention on developing a strategy to get rid of the unnecessary obstacles that the able-bodied unwittingly place in the way of people with disabilities.

We would support measures to encourage sport for disabled people in Scotland and foster their talent, enjoyment, access and participation.

Our society must also be compassionate. This is not the compassion of the Labour and Scottish National Parties, which leads people to believe that their obligations to others end when they vote for a Party promising higher taxes and spending. Ours is a compassion based on the belief that it is the excessive intervention by the faceless state that erodes the bonds of duty and compassion that bind society together.

We want to liberate our communities from this excessive intervention and release the potential of the Scottish people. A sense of community is deeply ingrained in the Scottish psyche and we believe that this can be tapped to revitalise civic society in Scotland.

In a society with unprecedented levels of education and prosperity, this means families and communities taking greater responsibility for their own welfare.

We have a duty to enable those within our community who through age, disability or unavoidable circumstances are unable to look after themselves to share in and enjoy the growing prosperity and opportunities of our society.

Achieving this aim will require far greater support and better core funding for voluntary organisations and carers in Scotland. Scottish Conservatives will provide this support.

from listening and learning: our seven commitments to you

- no new or higher taxes on Scots
- abolition of university tuition fees
- a full time nursery place for all 4 year olds
- zero tolerance for drug dealing and other serious crimes
- lift the beef-on-the-bone ban and ensure a fair deal for Scotland's farmers and fishermen
- introduce modern matrons into hospitals to improve patient care
- make the Parliament work for Scotland within the UK



Vote Scottish Conservative 3 times on 6th May



Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party
Suite 1/1, 14 Links Place, Edinburgh EH6 7EZ
Tel 0131 555 2900 Fax 0131 555 2869
E-mail: scuco@scottish.tory.org.uk
www.scottish.tory.org.uk