



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 13 May 2021

Session 6



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Thursday 13 May 2021

CONTENTS

	Col.
OATHS AND AFFIRMATIONS	1
PRESIDING OFFICER	11

Scottish Parliament

Thursday 13 May 2021

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 09:00]

Oaths and Affirmations

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Good morning, colleagues. I declare this sixth session of the Scottish Parliament, 2021 to 2026, duly constituted. The item of business this morning is members' oaths and affirmations.

I remind everyone that, unfortunately, physical distancing is still in place across the chamber and the Parliament campus. I ask members to take care in observing those measures, including when entering and leaving the chamber.

To ensure that physical distancing requirements can be safely observed, there are four groups of members. After each group has concluded, members will be invited to exit the chamber, to allow cleaning to take place before the next group arrives.

I will call each member in turn, and invite them to take an oath of allegiance or to make a solemn affirmation. Members should stand, if they are able to, when I call their name. They should then repeat the oath or affirmation after the clerk.

[As directed by rule 1.2.5 of the standing orders of the Scottish Parliament, the text of the oath of allegiance, in accordance with section 2 of the Promissory Oaths Act 1868, is as follows:

I, [name of Member], do swear that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, Her heirs and successors, according to Law, so help me God.

The text of the solemn affirmation, in accordance with section 6(1) of the Oaths Act 1978, is as follows:

I, [name of Member], do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.]

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow Southside) (SNP): The Scottish National Party pledges loyalty to the people of Scotland, in line with the Scottish constitutional tradition of the sovereignty of the people.

The member then made a solemn affirmation.

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con): took the oath.

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): Bismillah-hir-Rahman-nir-Raheem.

The member then took the oath.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): On behalf of the Scottish Green Party, I would like to reassert that our allegiance lies with the people of Scotland, who elected this Parliament and who are sovereign, and that we look forward to the day when they can choose their own elected head of state.

The member then made a solemn affirmation.

Lorna Slater (Lothian) (Green): I believe the Scottish people to be sovereign.

The member then made a solemn affirmation.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): took the oath.

George Adam (Paisley) (SNP): took the oath.

Karen Adam (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in British Sign Language.

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): took the oath and repeated it in Scots.

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): took the oath and repeated it in Gaelic.

Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): made a solemn affirmation.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): took the oath.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): made a solemn affirmation.

Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): took the oath.

Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP): took the oath.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab): made a solemn affirmation.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): took the oath.

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP): made a solemn affirmation.

Siobhian Brown (Ayr) (SNP): made a solemn affirmation.

Ariane Burgess (Highlands and Islands) (Green): Before making a solemn affirmation, I state that I believe that the people of Scotland are sovereign.

The member then made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Gaelic.

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Con): took the oath.

Stephanie Callaghan (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): *took the oath and repeated it in Gaelic.*

Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con): *took the oath.*

Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green): Before making a solemn affirmation under protest, I affirm the sovereignty of the people in Scotland and hereby declare and pledge that, in all my actions and deliberations, their interests shall be paramount.

The member then made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Shona.

Katy Clark (West Scotland) (Lab): Before making the affirmation, I state that the people of this country should be citizens, not subjects, and my first allegiance is to them.

The member then made a solemn affirmation

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Angela Constance (Almond Valley) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Natalie Don (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): *took the oath.*

The Presiding Officer: I apologise to those members whose names I slightly mangled. I hope that my successor was listening closely to how you pronounced your names.

09:26

Meeting suspended.

10:09

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: I welcome members to the sixth session of the Scottish Parliament, 2021 to 2026. Proceedings on members' oaths and affirmations are now resumed.

I remind members again that we are still observing physical distancing measures and that

you should take care when entering and leaving the chamber in particular. I ask all members to leave by the exit on my right when the meeting is suspended, to allow cleaning to take place.

I will call each member in turn and invite you to take the oath or make an affirmation. If you are able to, you should stand when I call your name and repeat the oath or affirmation after the clerks.

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

The Presiding Officer: That was flawless, Mr Dornan. I encourage the other members to wait until the clerk has read out the oath or affirmation and to repeat it. However, there is no need if every member is as good as Mr Dornan.

Sharon Dowe (South Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Jackie Dunbar (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Doric.*

Pam Duncan-Glancy (Glasgow) (Lab): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): *took the oath.*

The Presiding Officer: We just paused for effect to give Mr Ewing a big, dramatic build-up.

Fergus Ewing (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Jim Fairlie (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Russell Findlay (West Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee City West) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): *took the oath and repeated it in Gaelic.*

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): *took the oath.*

Meghan Gallacher (Central Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Maurice Golden (North East Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Pam Gosal (West Scotland) (Con): *Waheguru ji ka khalsa Waheguru ji ki fateh.*

The member then took the oath.

Pam Gosal:

Ik onkar, satnam, karta purakh, nirbhau,
Nirvair, akal murat, ajooni saibhang,
Gur prasad. Jap.
Ad sach jugad sach,
Hai bhi sach nanak hosi bhi sach.

Waheguru ji ka khalsa Waheguru ji ki fateh.

Mairi Gougeon (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): *took the oath and repeated it in Gaelic.*

Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Orcadian.*

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): My oath is to the sovereign people.

The member then took the oath.

Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab): *took the oath.*

Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con): *took the oath.*

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): *took the oath and repeated it in Welsh.*

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Scots.*

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Craig Hoy (South Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

The Presiding Officer: That concludes this part of the meeting. I congratulate all those who took part on becoming Scotland's MSPs for this session. I suspend the meeting and ask you all to go and sign the register.

10:31

Meeting suspended.

11:15

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: Welcome to the sixth session of the Scottish Parliament, 2021 to 2026. Proceedings on members' oaths and affirmations are now resumed.

I remind members that we are still following Covid restrictions and, therefore, they should be careful about following the social distancing measures, particularly when leaving the chamber.

I will call each member in turn and invite them to take the oath or to make an affirmation. If they are able to, they should stand when I call their name, and then repeat the oath or affirmation after the clerk.

We begin with Sandesh Gulhane. Mr Gulhane is a member for Glasgow, and will take the oath.

Sandesh Gulhane (Glasgow) (Con): *took the oath.*

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Dr Gulhane. I have one job, which is to know people's names, and I got that wrong right from the start—good one.

Fiona Hyslop (Linlithgow) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): *made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Scots.*

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Stephen Kerr (Central Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): *took the oath.*

Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): *took the oath.*

Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Doric.*

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): *took the oath.*

Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Gillian Mackay (Central Scotland) (Green): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP): *took the oath and repeated it in Gaelic.*

Michael Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): *took the oath.*

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Doric.*

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Màiri McAllan (Clydesdale) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): *took the oath.*

Ivan McKee (Glasgow Provan) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Paul McLennan (East Lothian) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Marie McNair (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): *took the oath.*

Jenni Minto (Argyll and Bute) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): *made a solemn affirmation.*

The Presiding Officer: Thank you very much, colleagues, and congratulations on your oath taking. I suspend the meeting for half an hour. I urge members to be careful when leaving the chamber.

11:36

Meeting suspended.

12:17

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: I thank members for their patience as we resume proceedings on members' oaths and affirmations in the sixth session of the Scottish Parliament, 2021 to 2026.

I remind members that we are observing social distancing rules. After we finish proceedings, you should be careful when holding conversations and, when leaving the chamber, you should follow the measures that are in place around the campus.

I will call each member in turn and invite them to take the oath or to make an affirmation. If you are able to, you should stand when I call your name and repeat the oath or affirmation after the clerks.

We begin with Edward Mountain, who joins us remotely.

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): *took the oath.*

Carol Mochan (South Scotland) (Lab): I believe that the people of this country should be citizens, not subjects. My first allegiance is to them.

The member then made a solemn affirmation.

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): *took the oath.*

Audrey Nicoll (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Paul O'Kane (West Scotland) (Lab): *took the oath.*

Angus Robertson (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in German.*

Shona Robison (Dundee City East) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Emma Roddick (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): I make this affirmation under protest in order to sit in the Parliament, where my allegiance will be to the people.

The member then made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Gaelic.

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): *took the oath.*

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): In my heart, my allegiance is to the people of Scotland.

The member then made a solemn affirmation.

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): *took the oath.*

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): *took the oath.*

Shirley-Anne Somerville (Dunfermline) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Collette Stevenson (East Kilbride) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): *took the oath.*

Kaukab Stewart (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): *took the oath and repeated it in Doric.*

Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab): *took the oath.*

John Swinney (Perthshire North) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Michelle Thomson (Falkirk East) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Maree Todd (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Gaelic.*

David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP): *took the oath.*

Evelyn Tweed (Stirling) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Mercedes Villalba (North East Scotland) (Lab): As a socialist and a republican, my true allegiance will always be to the people and not the Crown. However, in order to serve the people, I will make the affirmation.

The member then made a solemn affirmation.

Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con): *took the oath.*

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con): *took the oath.*

Tess White (North East Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Martin Whitfield (South Scotland) (Lab): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Elena Whitham (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP): *made a solemn affirmation and repeated it in Canadian French.*

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): *took the oath.*

Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD): *made a solemn affirmation.*

Humza Yousaf (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP): *took the oath and repeated it in Urdu.*

Foysoil Choudhury (Lothian) (Lab): *made a solemn affirmation.*

The Presiding Officer: That concludes members' oaths and affirmations and I congratulate each and every one of you.

We will move shortly to the election of a new Presiding Officer. I inform members that nominations for the position of Presiding Officer will open at 12.45 pm. The period for nominating will last an hour, so nominations should be submitted by email to the parliamentary business team and completed nomination forms should be received by the team no later than 1.45 pm this afternoon.

Nomination forms will be valid only if they detail the name of the candidate, the member

nominating the candidate and the member seconding that nomination. Candidates will also be given the opportunity to provide the name of a member who will act as a scrutineer on their behalf during the election process.

Parliament will resume at 2.15 pm, 30 minutes after the nomination period has closed.

12:42

Meeting suspended.

14:15

On resuming—

Presiding Officer

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The first meeting of the sixth session of the Parliament is resumed, for the election of the Presiding Officer.

Only one nomination was received. Accordingly, as Alison Johnstone MSP was the sole nominee, the election shall proceed in accordance with temporary rule 1.12 of standing orders. Members may vote for or against the nominee, or abstain. The nominee shall be elected if a simple majority of votes in the nominee's favour is obtained. Ballot papers should be marked with an X, before being folded. The clerks will then collect each ballot paper and place it in a ballot box.

At the end of the voting period, I shall invite any scrutineers who have been nominated by the nominee to monitor the counting of votes in room P1.02. There, clerks will empty the ballot boxes and count the votes. I will announce the result of voting when the votes have been counted and verified.

To ensure everybody's safety, and in line with Covid-19 protocols, I ask all members to put on their face coverings now, unless they have a medical exemption.

I declare the election for the Presiding Officer open. The clerks will begin distributing the ballot papers.

Members voted by secret ballot.

The Presiding Officer: Voting in the election for the Presiding Officer is closed. The clerks will take the ballot boxes to P1.02. I invite any scrutineers appointed by the candidate to make their way to P1.02 to observe the counting of ballot papers, while maintaining social distancing.

Members may now remove their face coverings.

In the election for the Presiding Officer, there was one nominee: Alison Johnstone MSP. The votes were cast as follows: For 97, Against 28, Abstentions 2. There was one spoiled paper. Alison Johnstone is therefore duly elected as Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament. *[Applause.]*

May I be the first to offer Alison Johnstone my warmest congratulations? Our newly elected Presiding Officer is one of the members who are currently sitting in the main hall of the Parliament. I therefore ask her to make her way to the debating chamber and to take her place in the chair for the remainder of the meeting. *[Applause.]*

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

Thank you, everyone. That means a lot. I am very grateful. I am sorry that I did not have a contest today, but I am very proud to be in this position.

For those of you who do not know, I joined Scotland Forward, the campaign for a devolved Parliament, before I joined the Scottish Green Party, back in the late 1990s. The Parliament is such an important place for me. I was then really fortunate to get a job with Robin Harper, who was the first elected Green parliamentarian in the United Kingdom, here in 1999. I have been in this building in a couple of guises, and it has been an absolute privilege for me to serve as a Scottish Green Party representative for the Lothian region.

I take this opportunity to thank my little staff team of Sally, Dan, Richard and Helen, as well as all those who have contributed in any way over the years, because that team has changed. I also thank my Scottish Green Party colleagues, my party and everyone who worked on such a fabulous election campaign. Before I forget, I also thank my very patient and tolerant family.

Today, I have been afforded a great opportunity and an incredible privilege that I will never take for granted. You have afforded me the opportunity to take on a major challenge at an incredibly important time in Scotland's history. We face various challenges. We are just coming out of the end—we hope, although we hear worrying statistics daily—of a pandemic that has affected the lives of each and every one of us. We have lost loved ones, and people have lost livelihoods. It is a very challenging time for us all, and it is the duty of the Government and the Parliament to do everything that we can to make sure that those living in Scotland have the best lives that they possibly can have and that we continue to work together and seek to reduce inequality and poverty.

I want to encourage a culture of open debate in the Parliament. We should be able to have that debate, and I would like us to have it in an atmosphere of inclusivity, mutual tolerance and respect. It is absolutely fabulous that, in this new session, I see more diversity—that is absolutely clear, and it is welcome. We have more people from minority ethnic backgrounds and far more women. That is fabulous progress, but we are not there yet. I know from taking part in hustings with Pam Duncan-Glancy that we have in her a real champion for disabled people. We can do better. We need to get to the stage at which the Parliament truly represents all people in Scotland, including people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, so that we really mirror those who live in our streets and neighbourhoods.

There are challenges ahead, of course. As well as facing the pandemic, we are in the midst of the nature and climate emergency, which we have to tackle. Our young people have done a fabulous job in bringing that issue to life, and they have helped to ensure that we adults debate it properly on their behalf. We have only a few years in which to act, and it is important that Scotland makes the most of the opportunity that the 26th United Nations climate change conference of the parties—COP26—will provide.

I will do my very best to make sure that each and every one of you has the opportunity to best represent your constituents, your interests and everything that is important to you. I recognise a lot of old faces—I mean experienced faces—and there are a lot of new faces, too. We will all have the opportunity to get to know one another better over the next few weeks, months and years. I assure you that I will do my very best in the role, as Ken Macintosh has done. His are very large shoes to fill, and he has done an exceptional job, for which I am very grateful. Thank you all. *[Applause.]*

I am pleased to announce the election of the Deputy Presiding Officers. Nominations for the position of Deputy Presiding Officer open at 9 am tomorrow. The details for the process of submitting nominations will be set out in the *Business Bulletin*. Nominations must be submitted no later than 10 am tomorrow morning. After the nomination period has closed, members will be notified of the names of the nominees.

I will resume this meeting of the Parliament at 10.30 am for the election of the Deputy Presiding Officers.

15:01

Meeting suspended.

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

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