



# Freedom of Information

## Scotlands grassroots fortnightly news bulletin



**The Image** (or similar) on the left is about to be plastered all over Scotland after Danny Alexander (LibDem MP for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey and Chief Secretary to the Treasury) unveiled

the plan, for any firm who wins a UK government contract will have to agree to display the logo on the finished work. Treasury Secretary Mr Alexander, who announced the move on Monday, said the plaques would "proudly adorn infrastructure investments from roads in Cornwall to broadband in Caithness". Alexander, said: "I've prioritised infrastructure in this government because only long-term investments will support UK businesses and get the public finances and economy on a firm footing. "It's only right that we recognise the contribution of the UK taxpayer in supporting this economic growth, which is why I'm delighted to launch these Union Jack plaques."

There is speculation from the SNP and Independence supporters that this is an attempt at shoring up support for the Union and stemming the rising support for the SNP who have branded the project as a silly gimmick. This was obviously denied by a source close to Alexander, who said: "Very often, large scale projects are delivered by private contractors so it's easy to lose sight of the fact that they are being paid for by taxpayers. "The new badging will allow UK taxpayers to see what is being delivered on their behalf." He added: "Devolved administrations are responsible for significant amounts of infrastructure and are obviously free to badge any projects they fund as they see fit."

The SNP's Deputy Leader and Treasury spokesman Stewart Hosie said: "Putting stickers on projects is a silly gimmick by Danny Alexander and his Tory bosses, which can't cover over the fact that his government at Westminster has slashed infrastructure spending, destroying jobs and delaying economic recovery, including cutting Scotland's capital budget by a quarter. "Despite this, the Scottish Government is delivering over £11bn of investment over the three years to 2015-16. Instead of the huge cuts imposed by Danny Alexander and the Tories, people across the UK would prefer more infrastructure investment, and fewer gimmicks."

Not only has the SNP ridiculed the idea, Scottish Independence supporters on Social Media have had a field day with the logo, posting images of atrocities, bad investment and social deprivation with the "Funded by" logo. Trident, Lords Sleeping in the House of Lords, Bankers Bonuses, MP's pay and pension rises are but a few "Funded by UK Government" Tweets and Facebook posts to have popped up on Social Media.

However, it's not all been laughter and memes as the idea has riled many in the Independence Movement, as like the SNP they also see the launch of the project as a way to hammer home that Scotland is British whether Independence supporters like it or not. That may be the case in reality, but in the current political climate it is not a wise move by a Westminster Government out of touch with feelings and sentiment in Scotland regarding the Independence issue. Feelings are running strong on both sides of the argument and the last thing Scotland needs is a Government out of touch with Scotland imposing things like this on a society that has such a divide in loyalty between Scotland and UK.



**On February 22nd Robert James McNeill**, the vice chairman of the East Lothian Constituency Labour Party and chair of the Tranent Local Labour Party. Member of the Scottish Labour Party Policy Forum, which develops the Scottish Labour manifesto, released via Twitter the image shown below.



The image is a suggested/recommended tactical voting wheel, the surprising thing is that it shows that Labour or at least some of the Party suggest that Scotlands electorate vote Conservative and/or LibDem. As stated in the Labour Party rule book-chapter 2-clause1-article 4b; "a member of the party who joins and/or supports a political organisation other than an official Labour group or other unit of the party, **or who supports any candidate who stands against an official Labour candidate**, or publicly declares their intent to stand against a Labour candidate, shall automatically be ineligible to be or remain a party member, subject to the provisions of chapter 6.1.2 below of the disciplinary rules" Under normal circumstances we should have expected a very angry backlash from Labour Party members, along with the expulsion of Mr McNeill from the Party.

Despite his call for Labour voters to vote Tory and LibDem and openly supporting these Parties candidates in an effort to prevent SNP gains in Mays GE, he wasn't vilified as expected. On the contrary, he got support, Duncan Hothersall editor of *Labour Home* Tweeted "Great to see support Robert McNeill is getting from Labour comrades". Tim Montgomerie, *Tory Activist and Blogger* Tweeted "I don't want English voters to wake up to the danger of a Labour SNP pact". Lord Lewis Moonie (Labour) Tweeted back, "Tim Many of us would rather form a coalition with the Tories".

To add to the support, Gisela Stuart, MP for Birmingham Edgbaston, has said that Labour shouldn't rule out forming a 'grand coalition' with the Tories after the next election if neither party win a majority. It appears the Westminster parties hate and fear the SNP so much they are willing to vote for another party or form a coalition with their rivals. I think it's about time Scotland had a voice in UK politics, that's why Freedom of Information recommends voting SNP in Mays General Election.

**As the saying goes** a week is a long time in politics; therefore, it is little wonder that by contrast the quinquennial (5yr) nature of elections makes the parliamentary office term feeling like an absolute eternity. And though it does seem like an age has passed since then, it is hard to forget the extended stay at 10 Downing Street afforded to Gordon Brown as Labour and the Conservatives both held talks with the favoured fringe party of the day, the Liberal Democrats.

If you need a recap – neither of the ‘big two’ had enough seats to command an overall majority, however the Tories had ‘won’ the biggest number of seats (306, including 1 Scottish MP), with Labour a bit behind (258, 41 of these Scottish MPs). And so the talks began, with both Gordon Brown and David Cameron whispering sweet nothings into the ears of Nick Clegg to try winning his sizable 57 seats worth of Liberal Democrat support.

As we all know, in the end Nick opted to form a coalition government with the Tories, and Gordon’s stay at number 10 finally came to an end almost a week after finishing as ‘runner-up’ to the Tories – and the rest is history. Or is it? For it seems lately that the Labour Party in Scotland are re-writing history (perhaps in addition to Clause 4), with their latest (mis)communication very untruthfully stating that: *"It is a simple fact that the single biggest party gets to form the next government"*

The facts are not as simplistic as Labour would have you think, because the current government was formed after a decision by the Liberal Democrats – who won less than 10% of UK seats. Such simplistic arguments put forward in conjunction with the fast pace of life that is politics does make you wonder if politicians perhaps believe the electorate actually only have the attention span of goldfish, 30 seconds. The Labour Party in Scotland will wound itself by treating the politically energised electorate in such a patronising way. There was a term mentioned before in political-spin of ‘low-information voters’ being targeted; not intellectually challenged voters, just ordinary hard working voters and family members who are perhaps too busy to read much more than a screaming headline, or perhaps can’t recall or weren’t too concerned at the time how events had unfolded.

On the evidence so far it seems that Labour in Scotland are primarily relying on fulfilling their quota of low-information voters. I for one hope the Scottish electorate make informed decisions and don’t allow themselves to be fooled in such a manner ever again.

**When is a vow not a vow?** Well apparently when it is written on the front page of a national newspaper. Almost six months on, and still no-one will confess to having written it. Almost six months – and a cross-party commission – and what have we actually achieved? Well if that same said newspaper is to be believed, we have achieved much! “The vow delivers” the headline screamed, when reporting on the Smith Commission Report on the new powers promised to Scotland on the eve of the Referendum vote. Or does it?



The Daily Record carried the report on the front page of the paper telling us how the Smith Commission would ensure that Scotland would be responsible for billions of pounds of tax and welfare in the new package. In fact it went as far as to say that the budget would ‘almost double’ – a statement it later contradicts when it says the budget would be ‘boosted by over 50%’. Now I am no mathematician, but even I know that doubling involves an increase of 100%!

The article was the subject of a complaint to the **Independent Press Standards Organisation** when it was published last November. Finally a decision was reached by them whereby the Daily Record were found to be guilty of misrepresentation of the facts. IPSO further instructed them to publish a correction. In the small graphic above, you can see the prominence the original story was given. That small square (top middle) of the graphic – the one that looks like a wee postage stamp – THAT is the correction. No front page headline for that – it was tucked away on page 2 and would easily be overlooked. A correction was also published on the website – honestly it really is there – though you would have to really hunt to find it! And even in the correction there was no mention of an apology for misleading readers. And certainly no chance of a similar prominent position to the original flawed article.

So what is the big deal? Newspaper make mistake – newspaper corrects mistake. Well maybe. But remember this is the same newspaper that carried the "**Vow**" in the first place – that mythical article that nobody wrote! The big deal is that many people get all their information from the press. Many people in Scotland (myself included previously) read the Record, and trust what is printed there. They may not have access to the internet, or if they do may not know where to go to find reliable information. This is as big a problem now as it was back in September. Each one of us **MUST** be open with our views. Where we see lies and inaccuracies we must point them out, we must take the person(s) to task. We cannot sit back and hope that the dissatisfaction with the Labour Party will be enough.

The SNP are indeed ahead in the polls, but there is still 2 months to go – that is 2 months of spin and lies, 2 months of "**dirty tricks**" aided and abetted by the media. We must remain vigilant – we must be prepared for the fight because this kind of behaviour is not going to go away – if anything it will get a whole lot worse.

Help spread the truth in your area, download this newsletter and print off some copies – post them through your neighbours doors – pin them on public noticeboards – ask if you can place them in your local shops – do what you can to make sure that as many people as possible get to read them – like the Facebook page, [facebook.com/groups/truescotnews/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/truescotnews/) and share it with your friends. And if there is anything that you would like to see covered in the newsletter, then take a moment to send us a message and ask either on Facebook or by emailing us. The forthcoming election will be one of the most important ones we have voted on in many a year – let’s all do our bit in promoting the truth – and in helping Scotland find her voice. **DONT** forget to register, new rules mean you may have to.

**The Next Issue of the Bulletin will be 18th March, 2015**

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