

Report From Policy Development Convener

Alyn Smith

The Policy Development Committee exists to encourage and facilitate policy motions to come forward from the branches and CAs, and in particular to encourage the more granular discussion of policy at National Assembly. It is safe to say that 2020 has been the year of disrupted plans and I will not pretend that has not been a huge personal frustration. The Policy Development Committee was just finding its feet with the approval of 12 monthly National Assemblies up and down the country when the lockdown forced the postponement of all meetings.

Where this was obviously the right thing to do, it has meant that the Party's new structures have not yet delivered as we hoped. However, we have not been idle and I took early advantage of Zoom meetings to have 60 meetings with branches and CAs up and down the country to discuss policy and the work of the Policy Development Committee. There were almost 150 motions submitted to Conference this year, which, again because of Covid, have of necessity had to be incorporated into composite motions, postponed until a subsequent meeting or referred to the Governance Review. This is frustrating in itself, but Conference this year is by necessity a constrained affair, and even in this new format will still be more engaging and interactive than any other Party has managed.

We have arranged a specific National Assembly for January on "The Road To Yes" in order to discuss from all points of the compass on the tactics, messages and techniques to win people from No to Yes. The polls are encouraging but things remain very febrile and we cannot take anything for granted. We are winning the argument but we need to win it well.

I undertook to use this report in order to do a retrospective report on previous conference, and reproduce our previous decisions below. All, obviously, are Party Policy and most have been implemented, or are as yet not capable of implementation as we are not yet independent, but have informed our Manifesto for the 2019 Westminster elections and subsequent activity in the Holyrood and Westminster Parliaments.

It has been a privilege to be the Party's Policy Development Convener, even if it has been one of the most challenging times to be involved in public life at all, and ensure the voice of ordinary members is heard and acted upon. We are winning. More and more people are turning to us for hope and for leadership, and want to know that serious people are at our posts and working hard on their priorities.

Independence, the big prize, is at hand.

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