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Scottish Parliament

Tuesday 5 November 2024

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 14:00]

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): Good afternoon. The first item of business is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is the Rev Dr Graham K Blount.

The Rev Dr Graham K Blount: It is a special and personal privilege for me to be invited back, 25 years after the first time for reflection. Twenty-five years on seems a good time to reflect, and what a day to do it on: a day to remember—to remember a foiled faith-based terrorist attack on a Parliament. That is a disturbing thought for today.

Halfway between Guy Fawkes and today, that Parliament had a major accidental fire. As the Westminster building was rebuilt, there was a competition for artists to submit paintings fit for the new building. One of those has recently gone on display at the national gallery in Edinburgh—it is called “Christ Teacheth Humility”, and it was not accepted for the competition. Officially, they did not like its luscious colours, but I wonder whether its theme did not fit, any more than it might fit in a church pulpit, six feet above contradiction!

There is a lot going on in the painting. Jesus’s followers are embarrassed, having been caught jockeying for position. Some seem uncertain at what their leader is saying; others are so enthusiastic that they might be banging their desks, if they had any. The opposition are horrified at the nonsense that he is talking, and some are hatching a to plot to get rid of him. Clearly, all that did not fit in a Parliament—and anyway, the backdrop has been described as “distinctively Scottish”.

Although the artist’s spotlight is on Jesus, he is pointing not to himself but to a wee child, shifting the focus from himself to someone whom everyone else seems to ignore—a crazy, upside-down way of thinking about who is important.

Humility rightly gets a bad name when it is urged by powerful folk on others to know their place. Here, it is an invitation to get beyond any sense that “we” know best, or that “my” church or “my” party has a monopoly on truth or righteousness. It is an encouragement to listen carefully beyond the loudest voices, beyond those with most to say for themselves. Could those be echoes of the hopes, dreams and visions that we

had for this place 25 years ago? I believe that they are still alive here, and outside.

May you, may we—with God—continue to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly.

Oh, and there is one other thing in the picture: a grumpy looking old man on the fringe, more in the “distinctively Scottish” backdrop, seemingly unsure what to make of it all. I am worried that he might be me—ask my granddaughter.

Business Motion

14:04

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

The next item of business is consideration of business motion S6M-15226, in the name of Jamie Hepburn, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on changes to the business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees to the following revision to the programme of business for Tuesday 5 November 2024—

delete

5.00 pm Decision Time

and insert

4.45 pm Decision Time

Motion agreed to.

Topical Question Time

14:05

Scottish Police Federation (Industrial Action)

1. **Stephen Kerr (Central Scotland) (Con):** I hope I am not a grumpy old man.

To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of any increased risk to public safety resulting from industrial action by the Scottish Police Federation. (S6T-02168)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Angela Constance): The Scottish Government greatly values the dedication shown by police officers and, in recognition of that, we have made a very fair offer of a 4.75 per cent pay rise. That above-inflation offer is the same as was awarded to police officers in England and Wales and is the maximum offer affordable, given the severe pressures on public finances. Officers in Scotland have consistently been the best paid in the United Kingdom and our offer would ensure that that remains the case.

I am disappointed that the Scottish Police Federation has asked its members to withdraw good will while the Police Negotiating Board for Scotland continues to progress the claim through its conciliation and arbitration process. In the meantime, I have been assured by the chief constable and by the chair of the Scottish Police Authority that plans are in place to manage the impact of the action.

Stephen Kerr: I hope that the cabinet secretary will forgive me if I am not reassured by the one sentence at the end of her answer that responded to my specific question.

This is a monumental mess of the Scottish National Party's own making. Morale is at rock bottom in Police Scotland, good will is gone and, starved of resources by the SNP Government, the thin blue line is stretched to breaking point. David Kennedy's letter of 30 October is a cry of despair on behalf of his members.

The action now being taken by the SPF will see a massive increase in overtime payments and huge gaps in cover. Public safety must always be the primary responsibility of any Government. Does the cabinet secretary accept that this SNP Government is failing in that duty?

Angela Constance: I say with respect to Mr Kerr that Scotland remains a safer place today, under this Government, than under any of our predecessors. For the record, we have made a very fair offer of 4.75 per cent.

I point to the fact that this Government has increased investment in policing in every year since 2016 and that that has contributed to a police force that we are all proud of.

Stephen Kerr: Once again, there is not much reassurance on the issue of public safety, given the gaps that there will now be in that very thin blue line. We have the lowest number of front-line police officers since 2007 and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland reported yesterday on the impact of the overall reduction in officer numbers.

That matters. Police officers are leaving the service at the first opportunity, stress-related absence is at an all-time high and shift safety levels are routinely ignored. It is embarrassing that the industrial action by police officers is happening when Scotland is hosting the International Criminal Police Organization—Interpol—in Glasgow.

What will the cabinet secretary do now to fix that mess of the SNP's own making?

Angela Constance: It is important to stress to Mr Kerr, and to Parliament, that negotiations continue. Nonetheless, I sought specific reassurances from both the chief constable and the chair of the Scottish Police Authority about what impact the withdrawal of good will would have and how that would be managed.

Thanks to this Government, investment in policing in this financial year has increased by £92 million. That is an increase of in excess of 5 per cent at a time when the consequences of Tory austerity have been very real. I am very pleased to inform Parliament that police numbers are once again rising. That is, of course, thanks to the record level of investment from this Government.

Audrey Nicoll (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): I note the cabinet secretary's confirmation that the pay claims continue to be progressed through the Police Negotiating Board for Scotland. Will she further explain the two separate processes for police pay and say whether any pay offer will be backdated?

Angela Constance: Police officer pay is negotiated through the Police Negotiating Board for Scotland, involving the Scottish Police Authority, Police Scotland and the Scottish Government. Police staff pay negotiations take place through the joint negotiating consultative committee, with the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland negotiating with the trade unions. Those formal structures are important. They provide police officers and staff in Scotland with a collective pay bargaining process and, as I have intimated, that process remains on-going. Once agreement is reached, that is backdated.

ScotRail Ticket Offices (Opening Hours)

2. Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): I remind members that I am the convener of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers parliamentary group.

To ask the Scottish Government, in light of any potential implications for accessibility, equality and safety for passengers and the public, whether it will permit the reduction in opening hours of ticket offices by ScotRail. (S6T-02170)

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport (Fiona Hyslop): No offices will be closed and there will not be any job losses. ScotRail ticket office opening hours have remained unchanged for over 30 years, but ticket office sales have reduced markedly, from 78 per cent to 14 per cent, over that period. Scottish Rail Holdings and ScotRail have rightly reviewed ticket offices to ensure that they deliver services that meet passenger expectations. The Scottish Government must ensure that ScotRail is deploying its resources in the best interests of passengers. I have considered ScotRail's proposals carefully and am content with them.

ScotRail's proposals would see an increase in the hours that ticket offices are open in 12 stations, while there will be a reduction in opening times of less than 60 minutes at 21 stations and a reduction of more than 60 minutes at 33 stations. Making those proposed adjustments to ticket office opening hours will enable the redeployment of some ScotRail staff to provide more and better assistance for passengers—especially disabled passengers. It will also mean that staff are more visible, which will help to deter antisocial behaviour and reduce fare evasion.

Richard Leonard: The cabinet secretary protests that there are no ticket office closures, but ticket offices at 54 stations across Scotland will be closed at parts of the day when they are currently open, although we do not even know where the axe will fall, because the list in the ScotRail press release last week, it now admits, is wrong. Does the cabinet secretary accept that ScotRail has screwed up, not least in applying now-obsolete criteria based on ticket sales alone, when the current procedure for reviewing ticket offices, which is now in force, requires decisions to be based on assistance, safety, security and access? Will she today direct ScotRail to apply the up-to-date tests rather than the defunct ones? Will the cabinet secretary publish the equality impact assessment of the proposed cuts to booking office opening hours?

Fiona Hyslop: Particular equality impact assessments have been conducted and they are reflected in the proposals. I hear what the member says about the criteria, but it is important to look at

the benefits for safety and, in particular, deterring antisocial behaviour that affects passengers. The visibility of ScotRail staff can help to address that. Trying to provide more dedicated passenger assistance, including for disabled passengers, is also very important as part of the service. The advice from Transport Focus, which represents passengers, has been included. The proposals will go to consultation with unions and affected employees, which will take a period of 12 weeks.

Richard Leonard: Here are the facts. More than 98 per cent of responses to the consultation oppose the cuts. The Transport Salaried Staffs Association has described ScotRail as

“disingenuous ... putting women and vulnerable passengers at risk.”

The RMT, led by its members on the front line, says that the action is “closure by stealth”.

Does the Cabinet Secretary for Transport not begin to understand that it is a fraud on the travelling public to describe those cuts as “frontline customer service improvements”? Does she not understand how angry people are after cuts to railway maintenance and hikes in fares—and now that station ticket office hours are to be slashed? The Scottish Government is the sole shareholder of ScotRail. Will the cabinet secretary use that shareholder power to intervene?

Fiona Hyslop: There are a number of factual inaccuracies in what Richard Leonard said. He might want to reflect on that, particularly in relation to some of the maintenance budget issues, which I have addressed in the past in a number of letters to a number of MSPs.

The consultation has just started, so Mr Leonard is factually incorrect in referring to a previous consultation. The 12-week period will take us to at least March 2025.

He will reflect that ticket offices are not being used as they were for ticket sales. It is important that we protect staff and their jobs. However, in the consultation that has just started, there will be an opportunity to enable that discussion and dialogue with the employees and the unions to ensure what passengers want and need: more visibility of ScotRail staff, to help them to feel more safe and secure.

I am constantly asked about antisocial behaviour on our railways. The change from having people in ticket offices to their being more visible in our stations and on our trains will be welcomed, particularly by the travelling public.

Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): ScotRail has stated:

“Where ticket offices see reduced hours, staff will carry out”—

as the cabinet secretary has said—

“other customer supporting duties”,

including

“increased staff visibility”.

What assessment has been made of how the changes can help to increase safety in stations in Scotland?

Fiona Hyslop: ScotRail’s experience is that targeting antisocial behaviour through proactively planning a more visible staff presence at the right locations makes our rail network safer and provides assurance to passengers. ScotRail’s proposed changes in staff deployment will make more than 60 staff actively more available to support passengers in that way. It is estimated that that increased presence will deliver an additional 11.5 million opportunities per year for interactions between staff and passengers. Such interactions help to provide reassurance to passengers and tackle antisocial behaviour.

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): In its proposals for Lockerbie station, ScotRail makes the same mistake as it did last time in getting the current opening times of the station wrong. I highlighted that to it at the time, as I did in the chamber to the cabinet secretary’s predecessor. ScotRail also proposes new opening times that make it impossible for staff to sell tickets in time for two of the busiest trains of the day, for the sake of 10 minutes. The proposed new times would also mean that staff would not be there to dispatch some Avanti West Coast services from the station—which, I presume, is a contractual arrangement. Therefore, when the cabinet secretary says that she is content with those proposals, is she really content that ScotRail is misleading the public over the current opening times, and is she content that it has not clearly thought through the proposals for Lockerbie station?

Fiona Hyslop: I very much appreciate Colin Smyth’s comments. He knows the detail in relation to Lockerbie station. I am sure that ScotRail will be paying attention to this question, and I expect it to respond to me directly, and to Colin Smyth, to address the points that he has made.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): The decision to bring back peak fares has brought back complex, costly and confusing ticketing on ScotRail services. Does the cabinet secretary accept that reducing ticket office hours not only removes passengers’ access to expert ticketing advice in order to get the cheapest tickets but significantly disadvantages disabled passengers who require assistance when travelling on our rail network? What consultation can the cabinet secretary continue with disability

rights groups to ensure that those people are not disadvantaged by the changes?

Fiona Hyslop: It is important to reflect that, in particular, access to information points is being rolled out and expanded. That is a requirement from us, to ensure that issues that were raised previously are addressed.

The point about making sure that more staff are available to help people with disabilities on and off our trains is important. The fact that only one hour's notice is required in Scotland, compared with two hours' notice in the rest of the UK, is a reflection of how important such issues are to us. The reason that the number of access points is being expanded is precisely to ensure that ticketing information is available.

However, the proposals have to reflect the changes in passengers' behaviours, such as when they choose to travel, when they choose to buy their ticket and how they propose to purchase that ticket. As we all know, that is increasingly being done digitally.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): Can the cabinet secretary guarantee that the changes, if they go ahead, will increase the staff presence and visibility at stations? When office hours have been reduced previously, that has not been the case. I am concerned that the cabinet secretary says that she is content with the proposals when so many concerns are being raised by members from across the chamber.

Fiona Hyslop: The proposals have just been announced and we are now going into a period of consultation with the affected staff. The individual points and the reflections of members can be relayed during that consultation. The Transport Focus feedback on the previous consultation has been important in reflecting concerns.

Access to information is critical, but circumstances have changed. It would be odd for any organisation not to change its processes in line with that, particularly if it did not reflect on changes in passenger behaviour, activity and travel times to reflect the reality. Our point is that there has to be redeployment for visibility and accessibility, which cannot necessarily happen if somebody has to stay in a ticket office for extended hours.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes topical questions.

Business Motion

14:21

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S6M-15206, in the name of Jamie Hepburn, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on a stage 3 timetable for the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that, during stage 3 of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, debate on groups of amendments shall, subject to Rule 9.8.4A, be brought to a conclusion by the time limits indicated, those time limits being calculated from when the stage begins and excluding any periods when other business is under consideration or when a meeting of the Parliament is suspended (other than a suspension following the first division in the stage being called) or otherwise not in progress:

Groups 1 to 3: 45 minutes

Groups 4 to 6: 1 hour and 20 minutes.—[*Jamie Hepburn.*]

Motion agreed to.

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill: Stage 3

14:22

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

The next item of business is stage 3 proceedings on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill. In dealing with the amendments, members should have the bill as amended at stage 2—Scottish Parliament bill 51A—the marshalled list and the groupings of amendments. The division bell will sound and proceedings will be suspended for around five minutes for the first division of the stage 3 proceedings. The period of voting for the first division will be 45 seconds. Thereafter, I will allow a voting period of one minute for the first division after a debate.

Members who wish to speak in the debate on any group of amendments should press their request-to-speak button or enter RTS in the chat as soon as possible after I call the group. Members should now refer to the marshalled list of amendments.

Section 1—Scottish carbon budgets

The Presiding Officer: We move to group 1. Amendment 1, in the name of Monica Lennon, is grouped with amendments 2 and 5. I call Monica Lennon to speak to and move amendment 1 and to speak to the other amendments in the group.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): I will speak to and move amendment 1, and I will speak to the other two amendments in the group.

At stage 2, Scottish Labour felt that it was important to amend the bill to require the Scottish Government to act in accordance with the advice that it received from the Climate Change Committee. For that reason, I lodged four amendments to achieve that aim, which were approved by the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee. However, after stage 2 was complete, I discussed with the Scottish Government whether that was the best approach. Helpfully, we received a swift letter from the Climate Change Committee, which had clearly been paying attention. It explained that it is not its intention to set policy for the Parliament or Government, and that it is important that it maintains its role as an advisory body. Scottish Labour reflected on that position, and we agree with that.

I am grateful to the cabinet secretary for meeting me and Sarah Boyack last week to try to find a form of words that would achieve a

compromise while still trying to strengthen the bill, which is what members from across the Parliament have wanted all along.

The effect of amendment 1 is quite simple. It deletes the part of the stage 2 amendment that talks about—I have lost my train of thought; I have too many scribbles on my sheet of paper—the Government acting in accordance with the advice from the relevant body, which would have bound the Scottish Government to take the advice, and instead inserts:

“take into account the most up-to-date advice they have received from the relevant body.”

In this case, that is the Climate Change Committee. I hope that that makes sense to colleagues, and I am grateful to the Government for its co-operation.

There is not much to say on the other two amendments in the group, but we believe that amendment 2, in the cabinet secretary’s name, is necessary because, at stage 2, an amendment passed that referenced provisions in another amendment from Mark Ruskell that was ultimately not passed at stage 2, so amendment 2 is an attempt to simplify and tidy that up.

Amendment 5, in the name of Mark Ruskell, aims to provide a super-affirmative procedure for carbon budget regulations, which he raised at stage 2. At stage 2, I worked with the cabinet secretary to introduce a pre-laying procedure for future carbon budgets, which mirrors procedure that is already in law in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. I understand Mark Ruskell’s aims, and we support the principle behind them, but we feel that in practice, the bill as amended at stage 2 provides a sufficient balance between scrutiny and timely action due to the new procedure under new section A5 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, so we will not support Mark Ruskell’s amendment 5.

I move amendment 1.

The Acting Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy (Gillian Martin): I am pleased to begin in the spirit of collegiality that has been a feature of progress of the bill. I thank everyone who has taken advantage of my pledge to have an open door with regard to hearing what they want from the bill and has engaged with me in working together to achieve consensus. That was shown ahead of stage 2 and over the past week ahead of stage 3. I am pleased that there is agreement with the other parties on the vast majority of the amendments.

I have worked with Monica Lennon on amendment 1 in the group, and I hope that it will be supported by all members. I understood Ms Lennon’s desire at stage 2 to ensure that the

United Kingdom Climate Change Committee's advice is given proper respect when we set our carbon budgets, but, as Ms Lennon said, the CCC has written to make clear that it does not want to be put in the position of determining, rather than advising elected representatives on, what levels to set carbon budgets at. I am grateful to Monica Lennon for her willingness to work with me and my officials to find a balanced amendment that emphasises the crucial role of the CCC without placing that panel of experts in an uncomfortable position.

The phrasing of amendment 1 aligns the language in this section to the equivalent provisions in the UK, Welsh and Northern Ireland legislation. It emphasises the importance of the CCC's advice while allowing the final decisions to be made by the Scottish Parliament, thus ensuring democratic accountability. It is a sensible and balanced approach, and I urge members to support it.

Amendment 2, in my name, and amendment 5, in Mark Ruskell's name, are alternatives to one another. I urge members to support amendment 2 and not to agree to amendment 5. At stage 2, there were alternative amendments providing for enhanced scrutiny of carbon budget-setting regulations after the first regulations. I supported Monica Lennon's amendment, as did the committee, which means that budget-setting regulations will be subject to the robust enhanced scrutiny process that is set out in section 97 of the 2009 act for other types of regulations under the act. That is the right additional scrutiny process for budget-setting regulations.

The other pair of amendments on the subject were from Mark Ruskell. Confusingly, one of the pair was agreed to but the other was not, leaving the bill cross-referring to new section A4A, which does not exist. My amendment 2 is a tidying-up amendment to remove what is now an erroneous reference.

Amendment 5, in the name of Mark Ruskell, is basically the same as the amendment that the committee did not agree to at stage 2. Again, it seeks to insert a section A4A, which was cross-referred to.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): Will the cabinet secretary confirm that what was agreed by the committee in Monica Lennon's stage 2 amendment is in effect a super-affirmative process that will follow the pre-laying procedure that we already have in the bill?

14:30

Gillian Martin: As a result of my amendment in this group, what we are doing is more of a tidying-up exercise. Of those two amendments, one did

not get passed, whereas the other one effectively takes forward the will of the committee. As I say, it is a tidying-up exercise on my part.

Like the committee at stage 2, I do not support inserting section A4A into the 2009 act. The bill as it emerged from stage 2 is in the right place when it comes to enhanced scrutiny. I hope that that answers Mark Ruskell's point. As the bill stands, section 97 of the 2009 act will require engagement before draft regulations are laid for the approval of the Parliament, on a wider and more thorough on-going basis than proposed new section A4A would do.

Mark Ruskell: We all agree on the importance of scrutiny of carbon budgets, and of committees having enough time to do that. We all agree that, ordinarily, it would be important to go through a super-affirmative procedure. There is obviously a rush to get the first carbon budget approved but, ordinarily, committees would be taking time to gather evidence and to consider whether the budget is adequate. At stage 2, I effectively introduced a super-affirmative process into the bill, which would have enabled committees to consider a pre-laid carbon budget for 120 days. As has now been clarified, Monica Lennon has proposed a slightly different amendment, which would enable committees to take 90 days to consider the carbon budget.

I am content with where we have got to. We have heard a clarification from the cabinet secretary. I will not be moving amendment 5; I will accept the cabinet secretary's amendment 2. That will tidy up where we have got to at stage 3.

On amendment 1, I accept that the UK CCC is an advisory body, but it is not an elected Parliament. It is this elected Parliament, ultimately, that needs to make decisions on targets. I am happy to accept that the wording is now better at stage 3.

Monica Lennon: I am grateful to the cabinet secretary and Mark Ruskell for their comments. I hope that colleagues now understand what happened at stage 2 and agree that we have now got to a better place.

Amendment 1 agreed to.

Amendment 2 moved—[Gillian Martin]—and agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: Group 2 is on setting Scottish carbon budgets: explanatory statement. Amendment 3, in the name of Graham Simpson, is grouped with amendment 4.

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con): I have one, simple, amendment in the group, which takes out one word: "broadly". The bill reads:

“A statement under subsection (5) must also set out, in broadly indicative terms, the proposals and policies in relation to each of the sectors mentioned in section 35(3)”.

It then goes on a bit.

The wording is the result of an amendment that I lodged at stage 2. I and other members felt that the phrase “broadly indicative” was rather woolly, so the happy compromise that I reached with the cabinet secretary was to take out the word “broadly”—and, broadly, that is where I will leave it.

I move amendment 3.

Mark Ruskell: Amendment 4 requires ministers to indicate in which carbon budget period Scotland will achieve a 75 per cent cut and a 90 per cent cut in emissions. Members will be aware that those figures represent the percentage cuts to emissions that were attached to the 2030 and 2040 targets in our climate legislation. The bill removes those targets and replaces them with a mechanism to set carbon budgets.

Members will recognise that there was considerable dismay earlier this year when the Government finally admitted that the target of a 75 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 was beyond reach. This is the moment when those targets are being removed from legislation.

I am pleased to have worked with the cabinet secretary to ensure that, in the forthcoming climate plans, there will be public transparency, so that we will be able to see when Scotland will meet the 75 per cent target and get three quarters of the way to net zero. We will also be able to see the date for meeting the target of a 90 per cent reduction in emissions. That is important for public transparency. This is not about setting up a shadow set of targets to run alongside the budget. It is important that the public and stakeholders can see how far on or off track we are on the original and important targets that were set.

I welcome amendment 3, which tightens up the language that Graham Simpson sought to introduce at stage 2. It will also ensure that we get more detail on the policies that the Government intends to introduce whenever the draft carbon budget is presented to Parliament.

Gillian Martin: I will be brief. I am pleased to have worked with Graham Simpson and Mark Ruskell on both the amendments in group 2. I will support amendments 3 and 4, and I encourage other members to do the same.

Monica Lennon: In the spirit of consensus, I advise that Scottish Labour, too, will support amendments 3 and 4. Graham Simpson was uncharacteristically woolly at stage 2, and I am glad that the wording is to be sorted out through amendment 3.

I agree with Mark Ruskell on the need for amendment 4. Scottish Labour strongly agrees that such a mechanism will provide a useful yardstick for monitoring how well we are doing on reducing carbon emissions. The key reason for our supporting it is the importance of the public having understanding, and amendment 4 will improve transparency.

The Presiding Officer: Does the cabinet secretary wish to respond to Ms Lennon’s comments?

Gillian Martin: I have no more to say on that, Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer: I call Graham Simpson to wind up and say whether he wishes to press or seek to withdraw amendment 3.

Graham Simpson: I will press amendment 3. As everybody seems to be happy with that, I will be happy to leave it there.

Amendment 3 agreed to.

Amendment 4 moved—[Mark Ruskell]—and agreed to.

Amendment 5 not moved.

Section 2—Replacement of annual and interim targets with budget targets

The Presiding Officer: Group 3 is on anticipating and responding to failures and anticipated failures to meet emissions reduction targets. Amendment 6, in the name of Douglas Lumsden, is grouped with amendments 11 and 12.

Douglas Lumsden: Like Monica Lennon with her amendment 1, I find myself in a position where I had a win at stage 2, when I got some amendments in, but I am unpicking some of them at stage 3. My stage 2 amendments sought to put a timetable in place for the committee and the Parliament. However, following discussions with the cabinet secretary, we felt that that would tie not the Government’s hands but Parliament’s. We therefore looked for a better way of achieving our aim. I am happy to have worked with the cabinet secretary to lodge amendments 6 and 12, which work together.

The other amendment in the group is Mark Ruskell’s amendment 11. Its changes to wording would add to the bill, so I will be happy to support it.

I move amendment 6.

Mark Ruskell: Amendment 11 seeks to tighten up the language from an amendment by Maurice Golden that was agreed to at stage 2. That amendment required ministers to set out their response to failing to meet a carbon budget. I agree that that is needed and I sought to make a

similar change at stage 2 to a different part of the bill. I accept the Government's preference for achieving the intention through section 35B reports; there is a strong logic behind doing so.

Amendment 11 adds to the text from Maurice Golden that was accepted; it adds that ministers' reports must set out the policy changes that will be made in response to a carbon budget not being met. That will ensure that ministers set out more detail about how they will respond and the changes that will be implemented using the most up-to-date data on Scotland's emissions reduction.

I am grateful to the cabinet secretary for constructive discussions on the issue. I think that the amendment improves the bill's transparency and it will improve committee scrutiny and public awareness.

Gillian Martin: The Scottish Government supports all three amendments in the group. Amendments 6 and 12 from Douglas Lumsden revisit the effect of two of his stage 2 amendments, as he said. I am grateful that he has been willing to work with me to do that. I entirely appreciate the intention behind his stage 2 amendments, which was to ensure that Parliament promptly and properly scrutinises emissions reports. However, as I said at stage 2, I do not think that it is right to, in effect, involve the courts in policing how Parliament undertakes scrutiny and allocates its time. Amendments 6 and 12 fix that issue.

I support amendment 12, which places a duty on Government to seek to make a statement in Parliament about an emissions report or to send copies of such reports directly to the relevant committee conveners.

Mark Ruskell's amendment 11 strengthens the provision that I worked with Maurice Golden to develop at stage 2 by adding another level of detail to reports under section 35B of the 2009 act, which I feel would be beneficial. As such, I am happy to support all the amendments in the group, and I urge all members to do the same.

Monica Lennon: Scottish Labour will also support amendments 6, 11 and 12. The amendments align with our aims to increase parliamentary oversight, to improve transparency and, as Mark Ruskell mentioned, to get the extra detail that we felt was perhaps going to be lacking otherwise. We will therefore support the amendments.

The Presiding Officer: Cabinet secretary, would you like to respond?

Gillian Martin: No, thank you.

The Presiding Officer: I call Douglas Lumsden to wind up and to press or seek to withdraw amendment 6.

Douglas Lumsden: I have nothing to add other than to confirm that I will press amendment 6.

Amendment 6 agreed to.

Section 3—Next climate change plan to follow setting of budgets

The Presiding Officer: Group 4 is on the climate change plan: deadline and procedure. Amendment 7, in the name of the cabinet secretary, is grouped with amendments 8 to 10.

Gillian Martin: The amendments in this group are focused on the procedure for producing climate change plans. I thank Labour and Green MSPs, in particular, for their collaborative approaches to the development of these amendments.

Amendment 7, in my name, fixes an error in an amendment that I worked with Sarah Boyack on at stage 2. I apologise again to Ms Boyack for that error, and I am grateful for her co-operation in working with me to fix it. Ms Boyack cannot be here today, so I have lodged the correcting amendment.

The correction is simply to ensure that the deadline for producing a draft of the first climate change plan is two months from the setting of Scottish carbon budgets, rather than that being the deadline for the final version of the plan, which would not be possible because of the length of the scrutiny period that the law requires in relation to the draft plan.

With amendment 7, I am also taking the opportunity to firm up the deadline for the final version of the first climate change plan so that it has to be laid before Parliament within a fixed period from the end of the scrutiny period in relation to the draft plan. The fixed period is 90 days, but half of those days must be days on which the Parliament is not in recess or dissolved.

My amendments 9 and 10 are minor technical amendments that I mentioned at stage 2 I would lodge to tidy up some of the provisions that were added by amendments from Mark Ruskell that I supported. Amendment 9 simply removes words that cross-refer to section 9(1)(d) of the 2009 act in a way that risked creating ambiguity about whether the extra consultative step would need to be taken if the timings did not quite line up correctly with the process that is described in that section. The Government is clear that the additional step should be taken in those cases, and that removing the words at the start of the provision will make that clear.

Amendment 10 is another minor fix, to tidy up grammatical errors.

I am happy to support Mark Ruskell's amendment 8. Of course, the Government would

consult on its policies and proposals for the climate change plan anyway, so I am content with that being formalised.

I urge colleagues across the chamber to support all the amendments in the group.

I move amendment 7.

14:45

Mark Ruskell: Amendment 8 would require ministers to set out in a statement to Parliament their plans for holding public consultations on future climate change plans. I lodged a similar amendment at stage 2. I thank the cabinet secretary for continuing that discussion with me ahead of stage 3.

It is absolutely clear that the Government must lead a national conversation on the transition that we as a society need to make. We also need to respond to public concerns and accept the public's challenge to go further.

A range of approaches have been tried, including deliberative democratic approaches, citizens panels and citizens assemblies. Ultimately, it will be for the Scottish Government to decide how it wishes to engage with the public on the tricky, difficult and challenging decisions that need to be made. It is important that we get social licence from the public to make those changes. Involving people directly and as early as possible in those conversations is really important.

Monica Lennon: I thank the cabinet secretary for her comments about my colleague Sarah Boyack. We had good discussions last week, and Sarah Boyack appreciated the cabinet secretary's willingness to fix some of the oversights at stage 2. It is good to have that sorted.

On Mark Ruskell's amendment 8, which we support—in fact, we support all the amendments in the group—we had a good discussion on the intention behind his amendment at stage 2, only a week ago. We understood and supported the principle, and amendment 8 gets the right balance.

This is an opportunity to remind the chamber that the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee has heard strongly from the climate change people's panel that the public want to be involved and consulted in a very dynamic way. A raft of recommendations are sitting with the Government. However, those are not just for the Government to reflect on; they are for other public bodies to reflect on, too.

Amendment 8 is important. Indeed, anything that reminds us that we need to take the public with us on that journey and get the best ideas from as many people in Scotland as possible can only be a good thing.

The Presiding Officer: I invite the cabinet secretary to wind up.

Gillian Martin: I do not have anything else to say.

Amendment 7 agreed to.

After section 3B

Amendment 8 moved—[Mark Ruskell]—and agreed to.

Section 3C—Preparation of climate change plan: further consultation

Amendments 9 and 10 moved—[Gillian Martin]—and agreed to.

Section 3E—Report on proposals and policies where targets at risk of not being met

Amendment 11 moved—[Mark Ruskell]—and agreed to.

Section 3G—Annual progress reports on climate change plan: further procedure

Amendment 12 moved—[Douglas Lumsden]—and agreed to.

After section 3G

The Presiding Officer: Group 5 is on assessing the impact of major capital projects. Amendment 13, in the name of Patrick Harvie, is the only amendment in the group.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): At stage 2, I lodged an amendment on the emissions impact of major capital projects. I explored a number of ways in which that issue could be fitted into the new legislative framework, and whether it should align with the carbon budget report, the climate action plan and various other points in the cycle.

I think that it was understood and accepted that there needs to be some way of ensuring that the Government reports on an assessment of the impact of major capital projects—on some of which the Greens will disagree with others in the chamber. There will be major capital projects that others make the case are compatible with our climate ambitions but which Greens would criticise. We can have that debate in an informed way only if those projects are properly and rigorously assessed and we have the information available to us in order to make those judgments.

Douglas Lumsden: I thank Patrick Harvie for taking an intervention. There are a couple of points on which I seek clarification. He referred to major capital projects. When would a capital project become a major capital project? Is there already a definition of that? Are we talking about

capital projects that are owned by the Government or would that include the private sector?

Patrick Harvie: I was about to come to the specific framing of the new amendment and the changes that have been made since stage 2, but I will address those points now.

I worked with the Government and listened to its response to the arguments that I put at stage 2. It suggested a form of words for amendment 13, which, as Mr Lumsden will see, includes placing in brackets the words

“as defined in the plan”

in reference to the impact of major capital projects. Therefore, it is the plan itself that will define what is considered to be a major capital project, and it will be for the Government to make that assessment. The plan must be presented to Parliament, so Parliament will scrutinise the judgments that the Government made in reaching that definition.

We have a clear example of the gap in the information. A climate compatibility assessment has been conducted of a major transport project that the Government continues to promote and which Greens continue to criticise—the dualling of the A96. That assessment is with ministers and has not been published. How on earth are we to be able to make informed judgments about future capital projects and their compatibility with climate plans in the absence of such assessments?

I am grateful that the Government has seen fit to support an amendment to fill that gap in the information, and I hope that amendment 13 will have the support of the chamber.

I move amendment 13.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Liam McArthur): I call Monica Lennon.

Monica Lennon: At stage 2, we were a little unsure about the wording of Patrick Harvie’s proposal, so we appreciate the further work that has been done since last week. For that reason, we are content to support amendment 13.

Douglas Lumsden asked a fair question about the definition of a major capital project. It is a question that we had, too, but I think that the wording of the amendment is reasonable. There will be proposals in the plan. The principle behind the amendment is welcome and we can support it.

Douglas Lumsden: We do not feel that we can support amendment 13. There is still a little woolliness with regard to what might constitute a capital project in the future. It is still not clear whether that would always include the private sector. I also heard the reference to the A96, and one of my fears about amendment 13 is that it

might be used to stop projects such as the dualling of the A96 and the A9.

Gillian Martin: I was pleased to work with Patrick Harvie on amendment 13. I support the requirement for the Scottish Government to set out in its climate change plan the definition of major capital projects and how they will be treated. That has given Parliament more information, which is the right thing to do.

The reports that we produce under section 33 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 at the end of each carbon budget period will require to set out details of assessments that are carried out on that basis during the budget period that is covered by the report.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Patrick Harvie to wind up and to press or seek to withdraw amendment 13.

Patrick Harvie: I have no additional comments to make. I wish to press the amendment.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment 13 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division. As this is the first division, I will suspend the meeting for around five minutes to allow members to access the digital voting system.

14:54

Meeting suspended.

15:00

On resuming—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the division on amendment 13. Members should cast their votes now.

The vote is closed.

The Minister for Public Finance (Ivan McKee): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I lost my connection, but I would have voted yes.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr McKee. I will ensure that that is recorded.

Katy Clark (West Scotland) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I would have voted yes.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms Clark. I will ensure that that is recorded.

I can advise you that your vote had already been registered.

Ariane Burgess (Highlands and Islands) (Green): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I would have voted yes.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms Burgess. I will ensure that that is recorded.

Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I could not connect to the app, but I would have voted against—no. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Matheson. I will ensure that that is recorded.

Michael Matheson: Sorry, Presiding Officer—I would have voted yes. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Matheson.

Michelle Thomson (Falkirk East) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My connection dropped, but I would have voted yes.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms Thomson. I will ensure that that is recorded.

Douglas Lumsden: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Will you clarify whether Michael Matheson's vote was a yes or a no? Originally, I heard him say no, and I would like to know whether members can change their vote.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That is not a point of order, Mr Lumsden, but I confirm that I accepted Mr Matheson's clarification that he voted yes.

The Minister for Public Health and Women's Health (Jenni Minto): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I lost connection to the app, but I would have voted yes.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms Minto. I will ensure that that is recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foyso (Lothian) (Lab)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)

Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Jamie Hepburn]
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Jamie Hepburn]
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Richard Leonard]
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)

Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 81, Against 27, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 13 agreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Group 6 is on financial resources to meet emissions reductions targets. Amendment 14, in the name of Patrick Harvie, is grouped with amendment 15.

Patrick Harvie: I am glad that everyone is logged in in time for this last group—although, on this occasion, I do not think that it will do me much good.

I want to take members back to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. In the passage of the bill that became that first climate act, 15 years ago, I moved an amendment making the case that we needed a degree of scrutiny of the Government's budget—not of the carbon budget that we are discussing at the moment, but of the annual finance budget, which, I argued, needed to be scrutinised through a climate lens. There is a good degree of consensus that we need proper and robust scrutiny of everything that the Government does under the heading of climate action, including the climate change plan and so on. In addition to that, however, I feel that we need to bring a climate lens to our scrutiny of all Government action, including all Government spending.

I therefore moved an amendment at that point, and the committee and the Government at the time agreed that there needed to be a carbon assessment of the budget every year. We were debating that at a time when no one had ever done it—no one, in any country, had ever conducted a carbon assessment of their budget. It was a piece of work that was about innovation and creating a new methodology, and we all acknowledged at the time that the methodology would change, evolve and grow over time and that we would learn by doing.

Although I think that the methodology has improved and that it still adds some value, what has always been missing is independent scrutiny of the Government's budget in climate terms, which is what I have sought to propose, both today and at stage 2 of this bill. At stage 2, I lodged an amendment to which the Government and others—quite reasonably—objected on the grounds of timescale—that is, that it would not be possible for Parliament to independently scrutinise the Government's budget in climate terms in the short time available between the UK Government passing a budget, the Scottish Government introducing a budget, and then Parliament passing it.

What I am suggesting now is that, instead of that scrutiny taking place within the budget process, we set a later date within each financial year, which we align with the end of May or the period just before the summer recess. That is the timescale within which the Government has an agreement that, in normal circumstances, it will present the medium-term financial strategy. That is not to say that the document specified in my amendments should form part of that medium-term financial strategy; it will be looking at one year's budget and asking whether it adequately funds the action necessary to be compatible with the carbon budget.

However, climate action works over a longer timescale, and so does the Government's medium-term financial strategy. At that moment—at that fiscal event, if we like—the Parliament will be asking all those longer-term questions, such as whether we are heading in the right direction and whether we are going to achieve what we are setting out to do.

The key issue is that we are missing the independent nature of financial scrutiny. The Scottish Fiscal Commission—which I would consider to be the appropriate body to carry out that independent assessment—gave evidence to the committee at stage 1 of this bill. Graeme Roy said:

“Nothing in the annual fiscal budget says, for example, what we are spending on net zero, so how can you have a bill that says what our ambition is and what progress we are making on the targets, if you are not able to trace that through to whether the Government's spending action is consistent with that? Is it overachieving, overambitious or underachieving? That is one piece of the jigsaw that has been missing.”

And it remains missing.

Parliament's scrutiny, of both the budget and wider climate action, would be stronger and better informed if this aspect of the budget was subject to independent scrutiny, in the same way that other aspects of the Government's fiscal policy are subject to independent scrutiny. We pass tax

resolutions through Parliament, but the Government's tax policy is first assessed by a body with the appropriate fiscal expertise—the Scottish Fiscal Commission—to tell us whether that tax policy will generate the revenue that the Government expects it to. We, as a Parliament, would not be in a position to make those decisions in a well-informed way if it were not for that independent scrutiny, and I am seeking to add that to the bill with regard to the connection between the fiscal budget and the carbon budget.

I expect that the Government will argue that that would imply somehow that it is only the Scottish Government's budget that is relevant to the investment in spending that we need in order to comply with the carbon budget. Of course it is not: every level of Government—the UK Government, the Scottish Government and local government—has a role to play, as does private investment, both by companies and by individuals and households, in redirecting our entire economy towards our net zero ambition.

As a Parliament, however, we have a responsibility to scrutinise the Government's budget as it presents it, and that scrutiny needs to be well informed with regard to the alignment between what the Government says that it wants to achieve on climate action and the contribution that it is making to achieve compliance with the carbon budget.

Douglas Lumsden: I am following what Patrick Harvie is saying. On that basis, would he also expect local government, when it is setting a budget, to have regard to the Scottish Government's carbon budget?

Patrick Harvie: I would urge local authorities to do so, but we are passing legislation in the Parliament, and I am suggesting that we consider our responsibilities as a Parliament in the decisions that we make.

We do not scrutinise and pass or reject local government budgets—it is for councils to do that. Our job is to scrutinise and pass or reject the Scottish Government's budget, and that task will be better informed if we require the Scottish Government to have independent scrutiny brought to bear by a body with the appropriate fiscal expertise. In that respect, I have in mind the Scottish Fiscal Commission, and I think that what I am suggesting is very much in line with the evidence that the SFC itself gave at stage 1.

I look forward to hearing what the Government has to say. I do not expect that it will support my proposal at present, but I hope that it recognises that, as Graeme Roy said, a

"piece of the jigsaw ... has been missing."—[*Official Report, Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee*, 10 September 2024; c 12.]

If what I am proposing is not the solution, I would be interested to know from the Government what it thinks that the solution is.

I move amendment 14.

Monica Lennon: I am grateful to Patrick Harvie—I think that he will recognise that Scottish Labour members tried to be open minded at stage 2, and asked him some questions in order to get some clarity. However, although we are sympathetic to his aims in lodging amendments 14 and 15, which I think are alternatives to each other—is that correct?

Patrick Harvie: Yes.

Monica Lennon: Nevertheless, we are still not fully persuaded by the proposed amendments.

When we discussed the issue with the Government last week, there was a willingness on its part to go away and look at what Patrick Harvie is trying to achieve to see whether something can be done. I will listen to what the cabinet secretary has to say in a moment.

As Patrick Harvie probably knows, we are not yet fully persuaded. However, I would be interested to know whether there are other measures outwith the bill that the Government could look at that would help to achieve those aims. Patrick Harvie makes an important point about the important connection between the fiscal budget and the carbon budget. As he knows, Scottish Labour members would agree with anything that will improve scrutiny and alignment, but in this case, I am not convinced. Given the fact that he has lodged two different amendments on the same issue, I am not sure that he is fully convinced either, but I look forward to hearing what he has to say.

Patrick Harvie: I am grateful to the member for reminding me that I should have been clear in my opening remarks: I am aiming at alignment with the medium-term financial strategy, but that document has not been produced every year, so I am offering two alternatives. One amendment refers specifically to alignment with that strategy, while the other sets a specific date rather than referring to the strategy.

My preference would be for the first of the amendments that we are going to vote on, but either option would be viable to enable the Parliament to have before it the information that it needs, and in time for in-year budget revisions to address the concerns that are raised.

Monica Lennon: I am grateful to Patrick Harvie for that further clarification. I repeat my point: Scottish Labour members are still not persuaded. I am happy to listen to what the cabinet secretary says, but I think that it is unlikely that we can support amendment 14.

15:15

Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP): I think that Patrick Harvie is doing Parliament a service by lodging his amendments, although he will not be surprised to hear that I will not support them. Towards the end of his contribution, he made the point that there are lots of moving parts in relation to the financial contribution that is needed to meet our net zero commitments, which include not just the Scottish Government budget but the UK Government, local authorities, private sector investment, businesses and consumers, who will have to bear a burden.

I am unsure whether amendment 14 is intended to get some independent scrutiny to ensure that the Scottish Government will, through its fiscal budget, provide the entirety of the contribution that is needed to meet its net zero commitments. The moving parts mean that if private sector investment increases, the Scottish Government might be able to decrease its contribution, and if the UK Government meets its responsibilities, more money might be in play for the Scottish Government to meet its net zero commitments.

I am not sure how amendment 14 fulfils the role that Mr Harvie wants it to, but there is merit in having this conversation in Parliament.

Patrick Harvie: I hope that Bob Doris recognises that, in any one financial year—because I am suggesting that we examine each year's fiscal budget in isolation—we will be very aware of the context. We will know what UK Government policy is and what kind of changes have been made in the investment that is being brought to bear by the private sector, which needs to play a role in reaching net zero. We already have to consider each year's fiscal budget on its own terms, in the wider context of how the rest of our economy is shaping up, and the connection with climate and with our emissions trajectory is no different.

Bob Doris: I take Mr Harvie's points on board, but he is talking about one year's budget, whereas if this legislation is passed, the Scottish Government will produce three five-year carbon budgets over a 15-year period. That goes far beyond one year and those budgets will be predicated on what private investment might look like in five or 10 years' time. Boiling that down to one year's financial budget when the moving parts include UK Government investment, what businesses and the private sector will pay and what local authorities and consumers will pay is not the way forward.

I will finish here. I have made this contribution because I think that it is important for the Scottish Government be clear about any gap in funding to meet our net zero ambitions. That gap is not

necessarily down to the Scottish Government, but could be down to the UK and Scottish Governments, local authorities, private sector investment, consumers, businesses and many others. We must identify what the gap may be, and it will not always be the responsibility of the Scottish Government.

Gillian Martin: I listened to Mr Harvie with interest, and I have also discussed this issue with him. I agree with Bob Doris that it is important to discuss this, because it is important to give as much information as possible about any funding gaps and about any assessment of how the Government spends its money.

I said at stage 2 that a pilot piece of work is being done to look at how Scottish Government spending relates to our net zero ambitions and to the carbon emissions associated with those. That work is in train, but I agree that there may be more work to do in designing and implementing a process that will provide meaningful information about how Government spending decisions support us in meeting our emissions reduction targets. I do not think that tying that process down in legislation is the right way to do it. We need to see how the pilot is rolled out and to assess how effective it has been.

I am open to further discussion of those issues with Patrick Harvie and with committee members. However, as we all know, budget processes are established and complicated, so there are some fundamental problems with his amendments.

First, we know that funding for policies to deliver on our carbon budgets will come from across our economy—including from the private sector—and not only from the Scottish Government. Bob Doris has made that crucial point, and Monica Lennon made it at stage 2, but it is not reflected in Mr Harvie's amendments. Amendment 14 refers to

“the financial resources being made available”

but, as drafted, it is unclear whose financial resources are being referred to, which would mean that any such document could only partially set out the resources required to meet our carbon budgets.

The formulation of amendment 14 is such that it calls for the provision of information about the resources that are needed to ensure that a carbon budget target is met, with a medium-term financial strategy covering at least five years. That may seem to make sense, because carbon budgets will typically cover five-year periods, but the amendment also says that the information is to be provided only in relation to the financial year in which the report is laid before Parliament, rather than requiring information about the resources that will be needed throughout the whole period that is covered by the strategy. That is confusing and I

think that it would result in even less understanding of the resourcing of emission reductions. However, there is work to be done, and I am happy to do it.

Patrick Harvie: rose—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Patrick Harvie to wind up and press or seek to withdraw amendment 14.

Patrick Harvie: I thought that I was intervening, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Oh. I call Patrick Harvie to intervene, then.

Patrick Harvie: Thank you.

I am grateful to the minister for giving way. Clearly, we disagree on some points, given the objections that she raises. However, she talked about the pilot, and I would like to know whether she is in a position to give an explicit commitment that the work that the Government is developing will be subject to external independent scrutiny, whether that is by a body such as the Scottish Fiscal Commission or another independent body with the appropriate expertise. There will be circumstances where the Government marking its own homework, if you like, will be appropriate, and other circumstances where it will not be. There will be situations where parliamentary scrutiny is appropriate and places where it becomes a bit of a political football. To my mind, that independent scrutiny is the critical missing piece of the puzzle. Is the Government in a position to give an explicit commitment that what it is developing will be subject to independent scrutiny?

Gillian Martin: I take the point about independent scrutiny of what we are doing. It is a really good point. At the moment, the pilot is an internal process. We want to embed it in the work that we are doing, but the finance secretary and I—she is sitting next to me—have to have a discussion on what would be appropriate in this area. I give Patrick Harvie a commitment that we will look into it, because his point is well made.

Amendment 15 suggests that there should be a statement in each financial year about what resources have been made available in that year to meet the multiyear carbon budget. That is impractical and it could lead to information being presented in a confusing way, as Bob Doris mentioned. I agree that improvement is needed in that area, and I have set out both at stage 2 and today some of the work that the Government is doing. I take Patrick Harvie's point. This has been a useful debate but, unfortunately, the Government cannot support amendments 14 or 15.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: At the second time of asking, I call Patrick Harvie to wind up and press or seek to withdraw amendment 14.

Patrick Harvie: I am grateful to members who contributed to the debate on the group. I am sorry that, as it seems, we are not in a position to change the bill to achieve what I am looking for.

I will respond briefly to a couple of the points that have been raised. The spending that is set out in the Scottish Government's fiscal budget each year is, of course, not the only thing that will contribute to the spending and investment that are necessary to make the transition to net zero and align Scotland's path with the carbon budget. Many other sources of funding and investment, including the private sector and the UK Government, are critical. However, that situation is not unique to climate; it applies in pretty much every other policy area. If the Government sets an objective in the field of health, for example, its achievement will be partly dependent on health spending and the investment that the Government makes through its budget for the NHS and the necessary services, but it will also be set by a host of other factors that affect public health, from individual behaviour through to the behaviour of corporations, given the goods and products that they sell, and other changes that are happening in our economy. Poverty and inequality will impact directly on health.

That does not mean that we should not set long-term objectives for health in Government policy, and it does not mean that we do not need to scrutinise whether each year's budget contributes what is necessary to help to keep us on track on Government policies. In that sense, climate is not different from other areas in which we expect to scrutinise the Government's budget and its ability to deliver on Government policies.

I will press amendment 14 to a vote, simply in order to register the concerns that I have raised. I hope that, in time, the Government will accept the need to close the missing area of scrutiny to fill in what Graeme Roy described as the missing jigsaw piece and to ensure that budgets are subject to independent scrutiny with a climate lens.

I press amendment 14.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment 14 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should cast their votes now.

The vote is closed.

Foysoyl Choudhury (Lothian) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I am sorry, but I could not get connected. I would have voted no.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Choudhury. I will make sure that that is recorded.

For

Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Lab)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)

MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 7, Against 102, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 14 disagreed to.

Amendment 15 not moved.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That ends consideration of the amendments.

As members will be aware, the Presiding Officer is required under standing orders to decide whether or not, in her view, any provision of the bill relates to a protected subject matter—that is, whether it modifies the electoral system and franchise for Scottish parliamentary elections. In the Presiding Officer's view, no provision of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill relates to a protected subject matter; therefore, the bill does not require a supermajority to be passed at stage 3.

There will be a brief pause before we move to the next item of business.

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): The next item of business is a stage 3 debate on motion S6M-15168, in the name of Gillian Martin, on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill. I invite those members who wish to speak in the debate to press their request-to-speak button, and I call Gillian Martin, Acting Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy, to speak to and move the motion.

15:29

The Acting Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy (Gillian Martin): I open the debate by thanking colleagues from across the parties who have contributed to the bill in the spirit of reaching consensus. Over the past couple of weeks, some who are in the chamber have been in my office as much as they have been in their own. That engagement has paid off, and the bill is better as a result. We have shown that, by working together, we can achieve through discussion the changes that we want to see.

We have worked together because we are all aware that it is only by working together that we can achieve our shared aim of reaching net zero. In the stage 1 debate, I said that we are tremendously lucky that every single party that is represented in the Parliament believes that climate change is a real and present danger to human safety and our environment. That is not the case in every Parliament. There are no climate deniers here, and we should be proud of that.

Gillian Martin: We need to look at how other countries have put their targets in place and reflect that perhaps the targets that the Scottish Parliament gave us in a bill put us in that position. No other United Kingdom Parliament did that; other Parliaments always gave themselves flexibility. It is a double-edged sword, because we want to show ambition, but that is not enough. We have to take the action that is associated with that ambition. We have to take into account other things that might happen, such as pandemics; we did not see that coming. We have also had inflation and the economic situation, which has had an impact. Things that happen outwith our borders, such as the illegal Russian war with Ukraine, have also had an impact.

Other Governments and Parliaments have not put themselves in that position. I hope that what is in the bill will keep our foot on the pedal with regard to the action, but the climate change plan is where the action really is. It will also not put us in a

position where we break the law. We need to reflect on that as a Parliament. Some of the measures in the bill to have more information about when carbon budgets will be agreed will be very helpful in that respect.

I want to go through some of our successes and achievements in reducing our emissions. Our tree planting stats show that we planted 75 per cent of all new woodland trees in the United Kingdom over the past year. We have more than halved the emissions associated with energy in this country, and we have improved our renewable electricity capacity. We have put a raft of policies in place, but the fact is that they are not enough.

Scotland cannot be siloed. We have to work together, not just within the UK but across Europe. The best way forward is always to look at what we can do in the devolved space and what we can do in partnership with other Parliaments and Governments across the UK on the shared things that have an impact on all our ambitions.

I would like everyone in the chamber to bear in mind that we all collectively need to get behind the action that is associated with reaching net zero. That includes working with other Governments, working with our constituents and understanding the fears that they might have around some of the things that they need to do to get to net zero and having a social contract with people on what we need to do to get us there in a just and fair way.

The bill will establish a carbon budget approach to target setting, moving from linear annual targets to a set limit on the amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted in Scotland over a five-year period. The expert advice of the Climate Change Committee will be taken into account when we make those decisions in secondary legislation.

That change will help us to account for in-year fluctuations such as harsher winters and support us to put in place strategic and fair long-term plans. The bill will also enable those carbon budgets to be set through secondary legislation, as I said, using the expert advice of the CCC.

If the bill is approved, it will lay the foundations for the next steps that we must take to reach net zero by 2045, and it will present five-year carbon budgets to take us to 2045.

After the bill is passed—and I hope that it will pass—we will urgently seek advice from the CCC on setting the levels of the five-year carbon budgets, and we will introduce regulations. The climate change plan has been worked on throughout the process, because we know that we will have to take decisions on the actions to follow the setting of those carbon budgets.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): The cabinet secretary—I said “minister” earlier—makes an

interesting point, which I reflected on when we debated the first climate legislation. At stage 3 then, we had a competition for the most ambitious amendments that people could make. Every single political party sought to make that bill stronger. There are climate deniers here, but they know that they are not allowed to say so openly, because those opinions are not given the space that they are given in other countries. That every party sought to make the bill stronger did not help us, though—did it? That fact did not keep us on track with the ambition that was set. Would the cabinet secretary like to reflect on why that did not happen?

Gillian Martin: Patrick Harvie makes a point that I am going to move on to, which is that it is not enough to set targets or to state our ambition. In the way that we have all worked together on the bill, we have to work together on the action that is required. That is a lot more difficult than what we are doing today. Today, we are looking at how we are measuring and how we are taking on advice from the Committee on Climate Change. However, we know that some of the options to reach net zero will be challenging and difficult. Anyone who voted on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill in 2019, which set the very ambitious targets that we missed, needs to reflect on why we missed them and what was not done to achieve them.

I hear the words of Roseanna Cunningham ringing in my ears: she said that it is not enough to set targets, and that we have to vote for the action. More than that, it is incumbent on everyone in the chamber to come forward with their ideas about how we can accelerate action in a way that is just. We have heard comments about where the Government’s spend is. When we make our proposals in the budget, we have to recognise that we have also set very challenging net zero targets. Every time we come to the chamber with measures that will reduce emissions, we need to bear in mind the responsibility that we have to ramp up action. That is my reflection.

I am grateful to members for providing scrutiny and advice under considerable time constraints. I record my appreciation to the committee for facilitating my accelerated timetable for the bill. It was not easy. I thank the clerks, members of the committee and colleagues in the Scottish Parliament information centre who supported members. I am grateful to the many stakeholders and individuals who reacted to that timescale and provided their views and expertise. I also thank my private office staff, who have been a major support to me. My heartfelt thanks go to my bill team—who are sitting at the back of the chamber—for their hard work, support and expertise during the progression of the bill, and for facilitating and helping other members from across the chamber

to draft their amendments. I hope that everybody gets a well-deserved rest after today, but not for too long, because we have important work to do on putting our climate change plan together.

Martin Whitfield (South Scotland) (Lab): What lessons can the Scottish Government learn from what was, frankly, the timetabling crisis that happened because of the concerns about missing the previous dates that were set into statute, which would have occasioned a potential breach of the law?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I appreciate that you have been very generous in taking interventions, but please bring your remarks to a close.

Gillian Martin: We have learned a great deal about how our targets system operates and how it might work better, but we must now put that experience into practice.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill be passed.

15:39

Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con): I thank the committee and the devolved Government, which have worked together to make significant improvements to the bill. There has been true collaboration, and I give credit where credit is due. I commend the Government's approach to the bill. It has worked with Opposition parties to improve amendments, and—importantly—it has explained and discussed why some amendments were unworkable. I guess that that is why at stage 3 we had only 15 amendments to consider and only two votes.

The bill is now at a point at which the Scottish Conservatives can support it; but, of course, this is just the start, and tough choices will have to be made in the future. More needs to be done to reach net zero, and we will continue to hold the Scottish Government's feet to the fire on the hugely important issue of climate change and our journey to net zero, because its record in this area has not been great. The devolved Government has failed to meet its climate change targets, it has failed to address the challenges that we are facing, and it has failed to set out a clear plan on how, together, we can achieve net zero.

The stage 1 report by the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee did not pull its punches on how the bill needed to be improved, and I, along with fellow committee members, other MSPs and the cabinet secretary, have worked hard to ensure that some of the committee's concerns have been addressed. I thank the cabinet secretary for taking

on board some of those concerns and addressing them in the bill.

I said in the stage 1 debate:

"The issue is too important, too big and too vital—its significance is too great—to rush through without adequate thought or thorough examination."—[*Official Report*, 10 October 2024; c 86.]

I still feel that that is the case, and I would have welcomed more time to work with colleagues on the issue. However, we are where we are, and we must move forward.

There have been welcome improvements following stage 2, and it is worth reflecting on some of them. I thank my colleagues Graham Simpson and Maurice Golden for their helpful amendments requiring the Scottish Government to share an indication of what policies and proposals might be included in the next climate change plan, including the requirement for a cost benefit analysis to be published for the period covered by a Scottish carbon budget. Importantly, a further amendment from Maurice Golden requires the Scottish Government to assess whether the carbon budget will be met.

One area where we did not manage to agree was the issue of alignment. The majority of evidence that we heard in committee supported alignment with the UK carbon budget. It was disappointing that the Scottish Government did not go down that road, but I am sure that we can make the arrangements work. I know that Northern Ireland has aligned, but Wales is not doing so, so I fully accept that there were arguments on both sides of that debate.

The amendments that have been agreed through the passage of the bill have strengthened it, particularly on accountability. That is badly needed in the Scottish National Party Government, which has failed Scotland and our green industry in past years. It has failed to achieve its key climate change targets in nine out of 13 years, it is set to fail to reach four out of its six recycling targets for 2025, and it has failed to publish its draft climate change plan.

During the stage 1 debate, I expressed concern that having the new bill

"will mean nothing if the devolved Government does not follow it up with actions."—[*Official Report*, 10 October 2024; c 88.]

The energy strategy is a prime example of that.

Gillian Martin: Does Douglas Lumsden accept that part of that future success will involve having the same kind of approach to our climate change plan as we took with the bill and that all the parties in the Parliament need to come forward with their ideas and collaborate on what a climate change plan will look like?

Douglas Lumsden: I absolutely agree. The way in which the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill has been handled and the approach to the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill, for example, have been like chalk and cheese. We have all benefited from that, and we now have a much stronger bill at the end of the process.

As I was saying, the energy strategy is a prime example. We have been told for months that it is imminent, but there is still no sign of it. During the stage 1 debate, I asked the cabinet secretary to intervene and tell us when it would be released. I repeat that invitation now. Can the cabinet secretary tell us when the strategy will be here?

Gillian Martin: It will go through Cabinet first, but it is imminent. It was only a couple of weeks ago that I said that.

Douglas Lumsden: I thank the cabinet secretary for that intervention, but this is the problem. We have been told that the energy strategy is imminent and ready. We were told that it was delayed because of the general election and that it requires Cabinet sign-off, but the Cabinet meets every Tuesday, so what are we still waiting for? The industry is waiting for it—it is waiting for the direction of travel and the certainty—but the strategy instead seems to be being kicked down the road while jobs in the north-east are lost.

The Scottish Conservatives welcome the bill as a step on the way, but more should and must be done. We need to see a draft climate change plan as soon as possible after the Climate Change Committee delivers its report, next spring. This party wants there to be a new independent office for net zero, which would work with and scrutinise public bodies and their progress to net zero. We would establish a national centre for green jobs that was based in the north-east, with a manager who lived in the north-east of Scotland. I thought that I would clarify that for our Labour colleagues, who think that GB energy should be based in Aberdeen but managed by someone 350 miles away, in Manchester.

The Scottish Conservatives want to continue Scotland's role at the forefront of energy. We, of course, support a transition for our oil and gas sector, not the cliff edge that it is facing under the devolved Scottish Government and Labour at Westminster.

We support the bill as a step along the way, but more must be done to bring us to net zero. Difficult choices lie ahead.

15:45

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): I am pleased to speak on behalf of Scottish Labour.

Before I turn to the bill and the amendments that we have just agreed to, which are, in large part, technical, it is important to put on record our sympathy for the hundreds of people in Spain whose lives have been devastated by the current emergency—the dead, the missing, the families left behind and the front-line workers who are risking their lives to save others. Our thoughts are with them. The scenes that we have seen in recent days have been, frankly, unbelievable and really difficult to witness.

As we conduct the debate, we should all be reminded that the climate emergency is not something that is happening far away. It is not a tomorrow problem but a right-now one. It is also a matter of life and death. I am pleased that we have the chance to discuss our shared passions for how we tackle the climate and nature emergencies, but we currently have real-time reminders that we cannot just talk about them—we need action. It is not a shortage of ideas that has brought us to where we are on the bill. Across the Parliament, members are passionate about addressing the climate and nature emergencies, but we need bold and radical action that has finance behind it.

Like other members, Scottish Labour colleagues are frustrated that we are at this point today. We would much rather be discussing the climate change plan and all the other exciting projects that we need to see. We know that not all of those will be easy or plain sailing—there will be debate about the action that needs to be taken—but that is where we need to get to. Scottish Labour has been clear that our approach to the bill would be based on being constructive and trying to find consensus. The bill was narrow in scope for good reason. We lodged amendments that were aimed at strengthening and improving it, and we managed to do that. We have worked with other colleagues on their amendments. Even when we could not support those, we always sought to find some common ground.

However, from the briefings that members received in advance of the debate, it is clear that stakeholders, including WWF Scotland, Friends of the Earth Scotland and the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland organisation share our frustration. People are a bit fed up and they really want to see progress being made.

Scottish Labour will continue to work with the Scottish Government. Without wishing to embarrass the cabinet secretary too much, I would like to say that it has been refreshing to work with Gillian Martin and her officials. I think that I am more familiar with her office's cushions and interior than I am with my own, because we have all been in and out of there so often in recent weeks—it is as though it has had a revolving door. We are all a bit exhausted, because committee and other

colleagues have worked really hard around the clock. It is important to recognise the efforts of Government officials and Parliament staff. It is not ideal to have to work at such pace; we want to have proper time to consider proposals and ideas. However, in getting to where we are today, following the stage 2 and stage 3 processes, we have arrived at a good place. I hope that we will continue to have dialogue and try to find consensus and common ground.

I hear what other members say about the issues that remain unknown—the bills, strategies and plans that we have still to see—not all of which sit with the cabinet secretary. That is a hint to the Government that those need to take absolutely top priority. That is why we need progress on a heat in buildings bill, the final energy strategy and just transition plan, and an action plan to reduce car kilometres by 20 per cent by the end of the decade, as well as support for our rural communities.

The opportunity is huge. If we get the action right and make progress, the gains will be not just for the environment but for our economy and our communities. The bill is an environmental, economic and social imperative. As I said at the start of my remarks, it is a matter of life and death for people and the planet.

We support the bill at stage 3, and I look forward to working with the Government and colleagues in the months ahead.

15:50

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): First, I pay genuine tribute to Monica Lennon for making the choice to open her speech by recognising what we mean when we use jargon phrases such as “the climate emergency”. This is here and now, and it is life and death. Monica Lennon was quite right to remind us of that.

Throughout this afternoon’s proceedings, I have been struck by—and a bit upset by—the extraordinary gulf between the atmosphere in the chamber today and the atmosphere when we debated the Scottish Parliament’s first climate change bill 15 years ago. Back then, there was a huge demonstration outside the building, showing the anger and urgency, but also the optimism and determination of a host of civil society organisations, which came together in Scotland as a climate movement that was more powerful than any political party or the Government at that time. That is what forced every political party in the Parliament into what I described earlier: a race to lodge more ambitious, more constructive and bolder amendments to strengthen the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill during its passage, which is why we ended up with ambitious climate targets—

well, those original climate targets felt ambitious at the time.

The atmosphere in the chamber today—when, for the most part, we have been simply nodding through technical amendments to a piece of framework legislation—tells us something about how we really feel about the bill. I think that we are a bit embarrassed by it, and I think that we should be a bit embarrassed by the need for it.

The first two climate change acts were statements of bold ambition, but the bill is an admission of failure. We need to own up to that and own it collectively, because that failure is largely a result of political choices that have been made. Even 15 years ago, when we were debating the first bold set of targets and racing for amendments to strengthen the bill, the Government was equally happy to celebrate a road-building programme; there was legislation to block or unravel road-pricing legislation that had been set in the first session of the Scottish Parliament; and a host of other policy choices were not being made in a way that was consistent with the bold ambition on climate targets.

Shifting from one legislative framework to another, what do we have in the bill? There are the multiyear carbon budgets, which is fine. I accept that the intention behind annual targets and achieving annual accountability to make it more likely that the Government would stick to a plan did not work—so, multiyear budgets? Fine. The bill includes accountability. It is not perfect, particularly in relation to the budget issues that I raised earlier.

However, the problem is not what is in the bill but what is missing at the moment, and that is the context of urgent policy action. I do not expect a full climate change plan right now, but I expect urgency. However, the assessment of the A96 is stalled and sitting on ministers’ desks unpublished; the energy strategy and just transition plan are stalled, too; there is a 20 per cent car kilometre reduction target, but nothing is happening on that; progress on rail fares and nature restoration is in reverse; and, this week, we find out that the Government is confirming significant job cuts in the heat in buildings programme—yet, without that programme, there is no credible climate change plan, and there cannot be one.

Gillian Martin: Will the member take an intervention?

Patrick Harvie: Is there time in hand, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member can come in briefly.

Gillian Martin: I need to clarify that there will not be cuts to Home Energy Scotland; that programme is continuing.

Patrick Harvie: We will certainly explore that, as the Government's quote in response to *The Scotsman* article seemed to suggest otherwise.

The fundamental question is this: how are we to have any confidence in a new framework? It is not enough simply to pass the framework, just as it was not enough to pass the original framework and the original climate targets. We need to have confidence that we will not wait for Climate Change Committee advice, the carbon budgets or the climate change plan, but will take action now on the issues that are already stalled. It is only by doing that that we will have confidence that the new framework will be effective. If it is not effective, I fear that we will be in a repeating cycle, and we simply do not have time to waste.

15:55

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I apologise to Patrick Harvie for having to briefly step out at the very start of his speech.

Like others, I commend members of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, witnesses, clerks and others for the work that they carried out in a truncated timeframe. Since the stage 1 debate, we have seen an impressive and fairly intensive amount of work carried out in a collaborative way, and I include the collaborative tenor and tone of the debate on the amendments this afternoon. I welcome that and I, too, acknowledge the part that the cabinet secretary has played. I would not suggest that I have spent more time in her office than I have in mine, but during our last meeting, she gave me the wrong office number, so she was clearly trying to divert me to one of her colleagues. Nevertheless, that collaborative approach is very much to be welcomed.

As Monica Lennon said, we are dealing with an issue in the here and now, so where do we go from here? A bit of context is necessary. To my mind, there has been a bit of historical revisionism. That has been less the case in today's debate, and I exclude the cabinet secretary from my comment, as her candour on the matter has been pretty exemplary.

However, there has been a suggestion that Parliament set up the Government to fail. Yes, the targets that were set in the previous legislation were challenging, but the UKCCC made it clear that they were achievable. Indeed, former First Ministers and ministers were very quick to talk about the world-leading climate change legislation that had been passed by the Scottish Parliament and pioneered by the Scottish Government. There

were no caveats; no one was saying that we had no idea how we were going to achieve the targets.

Patrick Harvie and the cabinet secretary were right: target setting has always been the easy bit. I think that it was Chris Stark who referred to it as the "sugar rush" phase. Chris Stark headed a UKCCC that was clear that the targets were stretching but achievable, subject to appropriate actions being taken by the Scottish and UK Governments and others. However, the UKCCC repeatedly and consistently warned about the lack of action plans. It was not that Parliament rejected those action plans but that the UKCCC never saw the action plans as credible. The blame invariably lay elsewhere, and we have to move away from that approach. Again, I acknowledge the way in which the cabinet secretary has gone about piloting this important legislation through Parliament.

I turn to the bill. The carbon budgeting framework is an appropriate way forward. I am more relaxed about the lack of alignment with the UK budget, recognising that, as most members did, there are pros and cons in different approaches. The flexibility that is provided is one that we can take advantage of, but it requires us to have a laser-like focus on the climate change plan and on the other actions that will lead to the delivery of those ambitions.

My final point is about transparency and scrutiny. The detail is absolutely integral to any chance that we have of hitting the targets, and that has been the weakness up until now. The detail will be vital not only for Parliament's scrutiny role, but for stakeholders outwith this building, who have a role and involvement in that process. Mark Ruskell made important points about consensus when speaking to his amendments earlier.

However, that we have the bill is a reflection of failure, and we cannot afford to find ourselves in that position. The handling of the bill gives cause for optimism, but all the speakers in the debate so far have acknowledged that the hard work and tough decisions are yet to come. Scottish Liberal Democrats are committed to playing our part in that process, and we look forward to voting in support of the bill at decision time this evening.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate with speeches of around four minutes. I call Michael Matheson.

16:00

Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP): Thank you, Deputy Presiding Officer. Like a number of speakers in the debate so far, I would prefer that this piece of legislation was not required—I suspect that that is also the cabinet secretary's view. However, we have reached a

point where, as the Climate Change Committee said, our 2030 target is no longer achievable within the existing timeframe and with the policy options that are available to us.

This legislation gives us a good opportunity to reset the framework that will drive us forward to achieving our net zero target by 2045. The carbon budgeting method that has been set out has been enhanced by the scrutiny of Parliament and is in a stronger place now than it was when it was introduced. It gives us a better and stronger framework to ensure that there is greater stability with regard to how we manage the process of achieving our net zero targets.

One of the problems with the target levels that we had set in bill was that they did not give much scope for flexibility or some of the variations that will inevitably occur over a particular timeframe. However, I agree with Patrick Harvie that the key issue in that regard will be not so much the framework itself but the policy options that we pursue to ensure that we deliver on the framework that is set out in the bill. As I said in the stage 1 debate, the low-hanging fruit is well and truly gone. We are now in a position where we will have to make very significant and challenging decisions to ensure that we can deliver what the legislation is intended to achieve.

I believe that, across the chamber, there is a consensus on the need for us to achieve net zero. Certainly, the majority of members agree that it is imperative that we achieve net zero, given the impact that climate change is now having on our environment. We can see that impact in some parts of the world just now, including in Spain, which Monica Lennon referred to. Therefore, it is critical that we continue to move at pace in those areas.

There are a couple of really important areas that we need to focus on as we move forward. In order to achieve net zero here in Scotland—and within the timeframe that we have set—the areas of investment that will be necessary to make that happen will require fiscal stability. That will require the UK Government to continue to invest in net zero in order to allow capital investment to be made here in Scotland in the areas that will help us to achieve net zero. For example, one of our big emitters is energy in housing. We require public and private capital to address that, and the UK Government's approach will be critically important to achieving that. We will need joint working between Governments and fiscal stability to allow long-term planning to be implemented and taken forward effectively.

Another big area of change is behaviour change. Monica Lennon referred to a 20 per cent reduction in car journeys, and behaviour change will be needed to achieve that target. That will

require a change in how we use things such as road tax. Will we shift away from fuel duty and road tax, which are based on carbon emissions, to a system that is based on road tolls? Some would argue that that is the approach that we should take, because that will have an impact on people's behaviour. However, agreement across the UK would be required to make that work effectively. Although we might say that that is the right thing to do in Scotland, it might be difficult to achieve that because the UK Government is not prepared to pursue that.

Monica Lennon: On the point about behaviour change, which is always an important and interesting issue, does the member recognise that it is very difficult for people in Scotland to shift away from cars and to use public transport when there are big areas in our country where there are no buses to get on or where buses do not come when people need them? The situation has been really deteriorating, and we have discussed it a lot in committee. Bus deserts are emerging in Scotland, even though people have a bus pass if they are under 22 or over 60. Does the member agree that we need to get serious about that?

Michael Matheson: I do not disagree with that. However, I am saying that we will require political leadership across the UK to achieve some of the targets. It will require us to make decisions that, at times, prove not to be popular. Right across the Scottish Parliament chamber, at local authority level and at UK level, we will require the right political leadership to ensure that the policies that will deliver the outcomes that we need can be delivered. That will require us all to work collectively.

I believe that the bill is in a stronger position now than it was when it entered Parliament, and that the framework that the Government has set out in the bill will deliver net zero by 2045, with the right policies alongside it to achieve that.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Graham Simpson, who joins us remotely.

16:06

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con): I hope to make a brief contribution—which, I know, will be popular with members.

Today, we are being asked to pass a bill that would not have been necessary if the Government had done its job. Patrick Harvie called it an embarrassment and “an admission of failure”, and he was right about that. We are being asked to dig the Government out of a legislative hole. As WWF has said,

“The need for this Bill is frustrating but it makes the best of a bad situation—we need to see action from government

that will put our climate and nature ambitions back on track.”

We have the bill because the Government failed to meet legally binding climate change targets or to produce a draft climate change plan by the end of this month, despite having promised to have it ready more than a year ago. That is why the bill has been rushed through. The Government was unable to abide by the law, so it has had to change the law.

Members are well aware of the background, so I do not need to go over it, but we have had a series of missed targets. Friends of the Earth Scotland said in its briefing:

“The 2030 target set by the 2019 Climate Change Act was ambitious but completely achievable.”

It went on to say:

“The need to amend the targets now is solely down to Scottish Government inaction”,

and it is right about that. The briefing went on to call for

“urgent and radical action taken now or the 2045 target will not be met.”

Like others, I welcome the constructive approach that the cabinet secretary has taken in working with us and others at stages 2 and 3. I suspect that Douglas Lumsden and I have not been in her office quite as often as Monica Lennon has, but we are superefficient. I have to say that I agree with Douglas Lumsden that the approach was in marked contrast to our experience during the passage of the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill. This bill is better for that collaboration.

We have had a number of amendments at stages 2 and 3, which I think have improved the bill, but the test will be whether it makes any difference at all to people’s lives. We do not know, because that requires plans and policies that are missing. We need to see the heat in buildings bill and, as others have said, a plan to cut car miles, if that is still the Government’s ambition—if it is not, the Government should just stop pretending that it is. None of this will be easy. Let us hope that there is more collaboration when it comes to doing the hard stuff.

I am happy to support the bill.

16:09

Katy Clark (West Scotland) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to speak in the stage 3 debate. I welcome the work of the committee and the amendments to the bill, which I believe have strengthened it. However, it is more than disappointing that we are having this debate today and that the targets that were previously set in law will not be achieved. The cabinet secretary made

her case very reasonably, but we have to accept that we will all suffer as a result of the failures to take action not just here in Scotland but across the UK and, indeed, the world.

As Monica Lennon said, we need only look at the dreadful scenes in Valencia this week to see the potential consequences of our failure to act. Although it might be hard to draw direct links between climate change and individual events, extreme weather events will become more common and more disruptive to our daily lives. As they do so, as we are already seeing, it will become clear that it is not just about isolated weather events that cause so much damage but about the on-going effect of a new climate on our interconnected world.

Climate change is not just a shocking event elsewhere but a global process that will affect us all, from disasters to everyday increases in the price of food and disruption to supply chains. It is therefore very difficult to put a financial cost on what climate change means.

We need to take action in many areas, including by reducing our reliance on oil and gas, which requires serious work. Therefore, it is very disappointing that the Government has missed nine out of its 13 targets, including eight in the past 12 years. We need to recognise that many environmental activists are angry and shocked by the decision to move away from the targets that were set. However, as politicians, we need to accept that those targets were simply not going to be met and that there has been a lack of ambition across our political institutions and a failure to grapple with the magnitude of the crisis that we face. As Patrick Harvie said, we are going backwards in many policy areas, and we are simply not taking many of the actions that are required to meet the targets that we discuss in the chamber.

I will support the bill, as it recognises where we are, but I hope that it will be a starting point in taking more of the real action that is needed and in seeing the depth of the climate crisis for what it is: a process that requires us to change how we organise our society. From how we transport goods and produce energy to which food we eat and how we travel, there is a need for fundamental change to how we manage emissions and the economy more broadly if we are to have a liveable planet. Climate change is not just happening in other countries; it affects us all. In the Parliament, we need to work collectively, across the parties, to show leadership and to match the warm words of politicians and the Government with action.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to closing speeches.

16:12

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): I join other members in thanking the clerks, SPICe and the witnesses, who helped us to deal with what has been an incredibly rushed parliamentary process for the bill. I also thank the cabinet secretary and her officials for their constructive engagement, over the past couple of weeks in particular, as we tried to make sense of the amendments that we could lodge in the time that we had available.

We are five years on from the Parliament's declaration of a climate emergency and 15 years on from the setting of those first important targets. However, there has been a failure to take early action to meet those targets. The cabinet secretary is right to say that there is consensus in the Parliament on the importance of tackling climate change and on the targets, but there has not been consensus on the importance of taking immediate action to tackle the crisis. That is what we need to build as we go forward. In this debate, there has been the beginning of an understanding of our failure in not taking action, but we need to move forward in that regard.

Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP): Will Mark Ruskell give way on that point?

Mark Ruskell: Unfortunately, I am really stuck for time.

Importantly, the bill does not erase the 2045 net zero target, which remains the north star and what we are aiming for. However, by removing the 2030 and 2040 targets, the bill makes the pathway to net zero a lot steeper. There has been a failure to take the early action that could have ensured that we were on a smoother pathway to 2045. That action has not been taken, so we will not meet the target of a 75 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030. I agree with Katy Clark that the fact that the opportunity to take early action was not taken has left many people shocked and angry. It is going to get a lot harder, and action is going to have to ramp up.

This is a narrow technical bill that, in effect, provides Parliament with a stronger role. With carbon budgets, we will get a better opportunity to scrutinise, and we will get better sight of what policies the Government will bring forward to back up its budget early on. There will be a climate change plan that will, finally, follow the budget pretty quickly, and there will be more public engagement on the back of that. If the Government fails to meet targets, there will be better catch-up reports, with more detail. There will also be a stronger link to CCC advice.

All of those are good things in relation to the Parliament's job of scrutinising the Scottish

Government, but there are still elements missing. It is disappointing that Patrick Harvie's amendments on financial budgets were not agreed to, because we heard great evidence on that from the Scottish Fiscal Commission, and it is clear that there is a critical role for independent scrutiny.

As Michael Matheson said, we need to get into a position of fiscal stability between the Governments. There needs to be a serious, central commitment to delivering on climate change ambition, which needs to be funded by all Governments. What we have—what the cabinet secretary talked about—is a commitment to a net zero test. That is important for the Government's own internal thinking about financial budgets, but we need to see independent scrutiny.

Many members have reflected on the failure of policy. We have continually seen one step forward and then two steps backward on climate policy. We are looking for the energy strategy just transition plan to come out soon and for it to deal with some of the contradictions, such as the fact that carbon capture and storage is still an uncertain technology, and that Peterhead power station will lock us in to using gas for decades to come. We need certainty on the A96. We need an ambitious heat in buildings strategy. We need road traffic demand management, which—I agree with Michael Matheson—needs to include road tolling and pricing: we need an honest conversation about that.

I am sure that the bill will pass at decision time, and members may be tempted to applaud that. The Greens will not be applauding—we will be abstaining on the motion to pass the bill, because it is an admission of failure. The only way forward is to double down on the action that is desperately needed to tackle the emergency, and we all have a responsibility to do that in the years ahead.

16:17

Martin Whitfield (South Scotland) (Lab): It is a pleasure to close on behalf of Scottish Labour at the end of interesting stage 3 proceedings and an interesting stage 3 debate.

I thank the committee, clerks and all those who have supported the advocates and politicians with regard to timetabling of the bill. I also thank my colleague Sarah Boyack, who apologises for being unable to be here due to a commitment that could not be moved.

I will spend the short time that I have looking at how we got here, not over the long term—the past decade or so—but at the timetabling of the legislation and, in particular, the expectations that were placed on this Parliament and the net zero committee by the Scottish Government.

I thank the cabinet secretary for her response to my intervention at the beginning of the debate. It gives an insight into the challenge of perception by the Scottish Government and the Parliament. Before I deal with that, however, I put on record my thanks to the cabinet secretary for the sea change in approach to members of this Parliament—both members of the Scottish Government's own party and members of other parties across the chamber—and for the open-door approach that was taken.

A cynical person might have said that that was in part due to the timetabling, but I would like to think that the experience has shown that, with an openness to the cross-party ideas, solutions and strategies that exist in this Parliament, we can, if not necessarily reach consensus, improve legislation by taking both sides' points of view into account and seeing the challenges. There is a way through.

In this case, the bill has had to be expedited because of the timetabling. Nonetheless, to echo the view of most members around the chamber, we now have a much better bill than we began with, and while it is clear that some members are unable to fully support the bill, they will not object to it.

I think that the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament can learn, from the experience of the past six or seven weeks, that there is a different way of doing policy. To echo contributions from members around the chamber, this narrow bill is just the start. It is, to a certain degree, a measure of the failure of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government. Nonetheless, it shows what we can do by opening up the issues and having the discussions. In considering the climate plan that needs to be brought forward, there will be opportunities to reach consensus across the chamber.

That is important, because—to echo almost every speaker today—now is the time for action, as we cannot wait any longer. We have strengths in the system in this Parliament, and we should use those to bring forward policy and make plans and decisions that people outside the Parliament can see, contribute to and help to build. When the matter comes back to the Parliament, therefore, we can, while perhaps not quite speaking with one voice, speak with a substantial majority to say that there are very hard decisions that have to be taken but those decisions can be made, and there is strong agreement on what follows.

However, that approach has to come first and foremost from the Scottish Government in its leadership. We have heard examples of where there have been failings over the past decade or so; I could go into that, but there is no value in doing so. There is an opportunity here. Having

backed ourselves out of a cul-de-sac, let us look at the roundabout of opportunity that sits in front of us. We can draw on that, and make the future brighter for—as Patrick Harvie said—those many hundreds, nay thousands, of people who turned up a decade and a half ago to celebrate the passage of the 2009 act. Let us re-establish that enthusiasm, not because people are despairing, but because they see an opportunity for a different future.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Edward Mountain to close on behalf of the Scottish Conservatives. I advise Mr Mountain that I can continue to be generous, as we still have some time in hand.

16:22

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Thank you, Presiding Officer—I fear that you might not need to be so, but your generosity is always gratefully received.

In closing, I note that we need to remind ourselves why we are here today: to discuss a climate change bill that was introduced because we failed to reach our targets. Those targets might have been challenging, but they were achievable, and it is wrong to blame anyone but the Government for failing to meet them.

We came here to discuss a bill that was talked about in May but not released to the committee until September. While I understand that the committee and the clerks, and everyone else, worked very hard to get the bill through the various stages, I say to the cabinet secretary that it would have been helpful if the bill had been released when it was first talked about. That would have meant that further evidence could have been gathered between May and now, which would have allowed the committee to form a more informed opinion.

I, personally, am disappointed that, despite the number of times that the committee asked the Government for information on the bill, it was rebuffed at every turn, but that is where we are. As a committee, we were given a very tight and pressured timescale in which to look at the bill, with stage 2 being discussed only on the Tuesday shortly after recess. Stage 2 amendments were lodged during recess, and stage 3 amendments had to be lodged by last Friday lunchtime. That is hardly an acceptable way to do legislation, and we could have done it in a much more considered way.

At this stage, I find myself perhaps agreeing—well, not perhaps; I agree—with Patrick Harvie. It is a sad day, because we have now accepted that the targets that we as a Parliament have set ourselves will not be achieved. That is sad news,

but I believe that there are some benefits. For example, carbon budgeting will give us a better way by which to achieve our net zero targets.

Another reason for sadness is that this Parliament has decided that it is not appropriate to align with the UK on carbon budgets. In my life, experience has taught me that if you try to rush ahead of what everyone else is doing, it invariably means that it will cost you more, as you will be using newer technology, which probably will not last the pace as you require it to do.

In conclusion, I congratulate everyone on working together, which we all have, but we had to do so because this Government was in danger of breaking a law that had been passed by the Scottish Parliament.

We are where we are. I look forward to receiving the climate change plan and the carbon budget when they arrive and hope that the Government will expedite those as soon as it has had advice from the Climate Change Committee and as soon as the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee—if I am still on it—has had time to give further thoughtful consideration to the targets.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call the cabinet secretary, Gillian Martin, to close the debate on behalf of the Scottish Government. I can continue to be generous with time.

16:25

Gillian Martin: Thank you, Presiding Officer. I will talk until you tell me to stop, because a lot of points have been made in the debate, and I want to address most of them.

I will not go over what the bill does, because I did that in my opening speech and because we are familiar with what it achieves. It changes the mechanism for setting our carbon budgets and for looking at and assessing the information that is required by the whole Parliament before we make decisions on what goes into our climate change plan and the ambitions that we set.

I have reflected a lot on what we did in 2019, when we set an interim target of a 75 per cent reduction in emissions. That was always the most challenging target. No one likes to fail: I do not like to fail and no one here likes to fail. We wanted to be in a position to reach that 75 per cent target, but a lot of people told us how difficult that would be.

Monica Lennon has just been to Iceland for the Arctic Circle conference, which I went to just after we set those 2019 targets. I was having a bilateral meeting with the then environment minister, who was a climate specialist, and he genuinely nearly fell off his chair when I mentioned our target of achieving a 75 per cent reduction in greenhouse

gas emissions by 2030. He used some quite fruity language, which I will not put on the record, as he asked, “How are you going to do that?”

I have never forgotten that, but I do not feel that setting a target that people criticise and say that we cannot meet is, in itself, a bad thing. That target accelerated action, even though we have not met it. That is a source of great regret to everyone—would that we had met it. It was always extremely challenging.

Patrick Harvie made a great point that I have heard made by many others: the fact that we have set targets is not enough to allow us to pat ourselves on the back or to go round the world telling people how great we are for doing so. Big deal. We must work collaboratively, within Parliament, on the ways in which we are going to get there. More than that, we must be able to articulate those ways to the people we represent, because none of this is going to be easy or cheap.

Michael Matheson made a point about fiscal sustainability. We talk about decarbonising heat in buildings. Why does the country that produces the most green energy of any of the four nations in the UK—and a great deal more than any country in the European Union—still have most of its homes being heated by gas? That is the case because it is cheaper to heat your home with gas. As someone who is the cabinet secretary for net zero and was the minister for climate action, on being confronted with a situation in which I need to replace my boiler—my house is not suitable for a heat pump—I am told at every turn, when I phone round, that putting in electric heating would be the most ridiculously stupid thing that I could do.

Therefore, we need market reform that recognises that we are a green electricity-producing country, and I am pleased to say that I am having collaborative discussions on that area with the new UK Government. Under our four-nations approach, I regularly meet Huw Irranca-Davies of the Welsh Government, Andrew Muir of the Northern Ireland Assembly and my counterparts in the UK Government. We need to recognise that there has to be fundamental market change and systems change in order to do the big stuff, but the big stuff is expensive stuff, and we must recognise that we are going to have to communicate that to our constituents and get their buy-in for what is necessary.

I do not want to get into any finger pointing. Enough of that goes on in the climate change debate. We are all responsible for the action that is required to deliver on climate change. It is not the responsibility of any one Government or only of local authorities; it is the responsibility of all of us individually and collectively.

Monica Lennon: It is important that we do not leave Parliament today having given the impression that this is just too difficult. It was not the targets that were the problem; it was the lack of action. The cabinet secretary has had a lot of compliments today on her approach, as she has been very open to colleagues.

However, what lessons has the Scottish Government learned? If we are to make the progress that we need to make, we need to see leadership and collective action across Government. I note that the First Minister is now in his seat. Can we get a few words of comfort that the Government has learned lessons? The fact that we are here today has to be a wake-up call.

Gillian Martin: The First Minister has four priorities, and net zero is one of them. It is obviously something that his Government has decided to prioritise.

I was about to go on to say that, at the moment, things are happening to decarbonise the whole of the UK—there are ambitions around that. However, I sense that, when we go out and speak to our constituents, some of the things that are happening can look unpalatable, such as transmission infrastructure developments. We must have a situation in which communities feel that they will get something out of such developments. That is another area in which I am working with the other Governments in the UK to make sure that the communities that are hosting developments and infrastructure for energy in particular feel the benefit of that. That needs fixed.

I will move on to another thing that needs fixed. There can be no one-size-fits-all interventions in this space. In the debate, I heard a lot about car use. I work closely with the transport minister in everything that she does. Indeed, I work closely with a lot of Government ministers, because action on climate change does not sit only in my portfolio. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; what works in Glasgow will not work in New Pitsligo. If I was to drop somebody there and tell them that they could get to their work in Aberdeen by public transport, they would laugh me out of town. There are different approaches. We must recognise that, in some areas, it is not feasible not to use a car, so we need to look at the systems that are available for people to use cars with lower emissions and so on.

I will mention some of the contributions to the debate. I associate myself with Monica Lennon's comments about Valencia. What happened there could have happened anywhere. It could have been us. It could have happened in any city. Flash floods are a real and present danger, and they are a result of climate change. My heart goes out to the people who are suffering there. We have had

forest fires in the Arctic and extreme weather events in this country.

Douglas Lumsden rightly pointed out that a lot of the amendments were about sharing more information so that we all have everything at our fingertips and we can make the necessary decisions.

I understand Patrick Harvie's frustration, but I again point to the fact that Scotland comprises very different geographical areas and not every intervention will work in Glasgow, Shetland and the northern isles. We need to look at the just transition element that is associated with that.

Michael Matheson said that the policy options that we are pursuing are significant and challenging and that we need to recognise that many of them will need an enormous amount of funding, which cannot come only from Government. We must put more pressure on the people in the private sector who operate in our country, as they have a massive role to play as well.

I will say one thing in response to Graham Simpson. I have enjoyed working with him on the bill, due to his pragmatic approach, but I am not so keen on the finger pointing. I hold my hands up: we have not met the 75 per cent target. However, we cannot keep looking back and apportioning blame, because meeting net zero is the responsibility of each and every member. It is about what we do in our own lives, what we say to our constituents and what we vote for in the chamber. That is the message that I want to leave people with.

When we bring forward our climate change plan and give all the information to people about the potential routes that we can take, some stuff will make members hold their breath and say, "Wow! We can't do that. How's that going to go down in my constituency? How're we going to afford the cost associated with that?"

We will all have to look at the art of the possible. That is the most important thing that comes next. Next time something is brought forward in the chamber, we will all have to remember what was said here today about the ambition being only the ritual, signalling part of the process. The difficult action is what we all need to get behind.

I thank members for their work on the bill.

Martin Whitfield *rose*—

Gillian Martin: I am just about to wind up, but I will take an intervention if the Presiding Officer lets me do so.

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): I call Martin Whitfield.

Martin Whitfield: I am grateful to you, Presiding Officer, and to the cabinet secretary.

If the cabinet secretary plans to seek agreement across parties, the work needs to happen in the weeks before she comes to the chamber to make her announcement.

Gillian Martin: That was pretty much where I was going to end. I have an open-door approach. I appreciate the comments about the lovely cushions in my office; more members can come and see those cushions and spend time in my office to talk about what, collectively, we need to do as a Parliament to get us to net zero in 2045. I look forward to those conversations and suggestions, and to our all taking responsibility for getting to net zero.

I thank all members for their work on the bill. We have done a job of work and have ruined quite a lot of people's October recess, but we have got there. I thank everyone for their co-operation with me and my team.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes the stage 3 debate on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill.

I am minded to accept a motion without notice that, under rule 11.2.4 of standing orders, decision time be brought forward to now. I invite the Minister for Parliamentary Business to move such a motion.

Motion moved,

That, under Rule 11.2.4, Decision Time be brought forward to 4.37 pm.—[*Jamie Hepburn*]

Motion agreed to.

Decision Time

16:37

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): There is one question to be put as a result of today's business. The question is, that motion S6M-15168, in the name of Gillian Martin, on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, be agreed to.

As this is a motion to pass the bill at stage 3, the question must be decided by division. As members have been voting throughout the afternoon, I will allow a moment for them to refresh the voting app before voting.

The vote is closed.

Elena Whitham (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My app would not refresh. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: We will ensure that that is recorded.

The Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise (Natalie Don-Innes): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I think that my app froze. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: We will ensure that that is recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Choudhury, Foyso (Lothian) (Lab)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)

Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Jamie Hepburn]
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Jamie Hepburn]
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Regan, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (Alba)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Richard Leonard]
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)

White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Abstentions

Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on motion S6M-15168, in the name of Gillian Martin, is: For 105, Against 0, Abstentions 7.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill be passed.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time. We will now move to members' business.

One Parent Families Scotland (80th Anniversary)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S6M-14922, in the name of Karen Adam, on celebrating One Parent Families Scotland's 80th anniversary. The debate will be concluded without any question being put. I invite members who wish to speak in the debate to press their request-to-speak buttons, and I call Karen Adam to open the debate. You have around seven minutes.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament congratulates One Parent Families Scotland on reaching the remarkable milestone of its 80th anniversary, and commends the charity for its unwavering dedication to empowering single parents to realise their full potential; recognises what it sees as the charity's crucial role in offering a comprehensive range of support services, including family, employability, young parent support, welfare rights, and financial advice through its five family centres in Dundee, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow and North Lanarkshire, as well as its national lone parent helpline and digital services; acknowledges that the charity, originally established in the 1940s as the Scottish Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child, was founded with a mission to keep unmarried mothers and their children together; celebrates the charity's extraordinary growth into an impactful organisation, employing 97 dedicated staff members, supporting over 8,000 parents, children, and young people each year, and providing what it considers to be life-changing welfare rights and financial advice that has, it understands, benefited nearly 4,000 families to date, resulting in financial gains for families exceeding £1.6 million; recognises that one in four families with children in Scotland are single-parent households, with 90% of these led by women; believes that, despite significant progress since the 1940s, gender inequality continues to fuel discrimination against many single mothers; understands the unique challenges faced by single parents combining the roles of sole carer and provider without the support of another adult, often facing a higher risk of poverty than other households; applauds the charity for its tireless advocacy for single parents at every level of government, working to create lasting solutions to what it sees as the widespread poverty that many face, and celebrates what it considers to be the remarkable resilience of single parents and the exceptional strength that they demonstrate every day in raising their families.

16:42

Karen Adam (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): Before I begin, I want to take a moment to recognise the work of my colleague Stephanie Callaghan MSP on the issue and to thank her for the opportunity to lead this debate.

I also wish to congratulate One Parent Families Scotland on an extraordinary milestone—80 years of dedicated service to single-parent families. This anniversary not only marks the longevity of a vital charity but is a celebration of its unwavering

commitment to empowering single parents to realise their full potential.

As we gather to commend the organisation for the incredible work that it has done, I will reflect on the realities that are faced by so many single parents across our nation. For many of us—me included—this is not just a policy discussion: it is personal. I know at first hand the struggles that come with raising a family on your own. I have lived the long nights when I finally tuck the children in to bed, which is when the day's tasks actually begin. There is no passing of the baton and there is no partner to lean on when the weight of it all becomes too much. We are juggling bedtime stories and bills, school pick-ups and work commitments, and the burden is never shared. It is from that place of experience and empathy that I speak today. I have been that parent in the quiet home where exhaustion can sit heavy but the to-do list never seems to end. I know the anxiety that can grip you when an unexpected expense comes up or when you think about how you will manage tomorrow's demands.

The truth is that single parents wear many hats and they wear them all at once—sole provider, caretaker, chef, taxi driver, financial planner and so much more. For that, they deserve our deepest admiration, not judgment or stigma. One Parent Families Scotland has dedicated 80 years to breaking down that stigma and to creating more understanding and a compassionate society. From its early days as the Scottish Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child, which was founded to keep mothers and their children together, to its modern incarnation offering a wide range of life-changing services, the charity has remained a lifeline for so many, whether through its family centres in Dundee, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow and North Lanarkshire or through its national lone parent helpline and digital services. It provides essential support that empowers parents and uplifts families.

The impact of that support cannot be overstated. The charity employs 97 dedicated staff members, who give their all to ensure that more than 8,000 parents, children and young people are supported each year. Nearly 4,000 families have received vital advice on welfare rights and financial matters, collectively benefiting from financial gains exceeding £1.6 million. It is transformative work, and it enables single parents to breathe a little easier and to focus more on their children and less on the stress of making ends meet.

However, we know that, for every success story, there are thousands of parents who are still struggling. One in four families with children in Scotland is a single-parent household, with a staggering 90 per cent of those families being led

by women. Gender inequality remains a persistent force that compounds the challenges that those families face. Society has made progress since the 1940s—thank goodness—but we must recognise that the burden and shame that single parents, particularly single mothers, continue to bear is deeply rooted in outdated societal attitudes.

Let us talk about that stigma. Too often, single parents are met with judgment instead of support. Society can be harsh, and some perceptions make an already difficult path even more isolating. The shame that is placed on single parents and the misconceptions about them are unfair and unfounded. They are warriors who are deserving of our respect and practical support, not whispered assumptions about their worth.

The work of One Parent Families Scotland is crucial not just because it offers practical support, but because it does so with compassion and understanding of the reality that single parents face. It acts as a tireless advocate that is pushing for systemic changes to end the widespread poverty that so many experience. Its services are not only practical, but life affirming, helping parents to find employment, supporting young parents and providing the guidance that is needed to navigate complex welfare systems.

For those who have never experienced this struggle, it might be easy to underestimate the sheer strength that it takes to do what some single parents do every day. It is not just about surviving; it is about thriving for the children's sake. They create homes that are filled with love, opportunity and security, often despite overwhelming odds.

The charity's legacy is built on the resilience and strength of the families that it serves. Almost a quarter of households are single-parent families, and One Parent Families Scotland's support has been there every step of the way, advocating at every level of government to create lasting solutions to poverty. That advocacy, combined with tangible support, has empowered countless parents to move from crisis to stability.

I take my hat off to every single parent. I see them. I know about the sacrifices, the relentless hard work and the sleepless nights. They deserve our praise and unyielding support. They deserve a society that lifts them up instead of trying to pull them down.

I extend my deepest gratitude to One Parent Families Scotland for an incredible 80 years of service. I thank it for its advocacy, for its compassion and for ensuring that single parents are never alone in their journey. Let us honour this anniversary not just with words of congratulations, but with continued action and commitment to creating a Scotland that truly supports all families.

16:49

Emma Roddick (Highlands and Islands)

(SNP): I thank Karen Adam for securing the debate and for allowing MSPs to join her in celebrating One Parent Families Scotland's 80th birthday. Her motion describes One Parent Families Scotland as performing "tireless advocacy", and that is absolutely right. It is very difficult to miss representations from the organisation whenever the Parliament discusses social security or parental support. It is visible, consistent and true to the aims of supporting single parents in Scotland.

Karen Adam's children are lucky to have her. I congratulate her on her ability to share how difficult it is to be the one parent who is sitting there, feeling alone. I was raised in a one-parent household from the age of four. My mum had a good job, but she also had two kids. It is only with the benefit of hindsight in adulthood that I realise the difficulties that I would have presented her with when, at various ages, I complained to her about not having a brother, about being left at after-school clubs because she left for work at 8 in the morning and got home at 6.30 in the evening, and about wanting to go to Disneyland in the summer. She did not complain about those comments, but I am sorry now for saying those childish things.

The thing is that children do not understand why they do not get what they want, why their pal got more toys from Santa even though they did the hoovering, or why the popular folks are wearing Ugg boots and holding new phones but they are not. Those factors must put such a lot of pressure on any parent, especially when the state seems to turn its back on the ones under the most pressure and on their struggles by removing the little support that allows them to provide their kids with the basics.

Like the Scottish National Party, One Parent Families Scotland has been extremely clear about its opposition to the two-child cap on benefits. Back in 2017, when the Conservatives first made cuts to child tax credits, the move was described in this Parliament as having "gone too far". Labour's amendment to the Government's motion, which was voted through with the Government's support, included the following line:

"further condemns any government that forces women to relive a horrific event in their lives to access social security for a third child".—[*Official Report*, 25 April 2017; c 22.]

Yet here we are, seven years later, and it is a Labour Government that we must condemn for forcing women to relive horrific events, for pushing children across the United Kingdom into poverty and for rebranding and relaunching as a Labour policy one that goes too far and is too cruel.

As the Labour Party has failed to take the opportunity of writing its own budget to remove the cruel and unfair cap, what is now Government policy is keeping children in poverty. It is also making life harder for single-parent families by costing them up to £3,235 a year per child, and it is indefensible. Any Government that forces women to relive a horrific event in their lives in order to access social security for a third child should be condemned. Labour should listen to One Parent Families Scotland, families across the UK and the former Labour MPs who refused to back the policy and do the right thing for the hundreds of thousands of children it is consigning to poverty and confusion.

16:52

Roz McCall (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I, too, thank Karen Adam for bringing the debate to the chamber and for making such an honest and frank opening speech.

I congratulate One Parent Families Scotland on its 80th anniversary. We have just heard from Ms Adam a fantastic overview of what that organisation does. It was founded as far back as the 1940s, since when it has grown into a major Scottish charity, which, in 2022-23, had an income of more than £2 million. It provides family support services, employability services and welfare rights advice, as well as campaigning on prominent issues such as ending the so-called young parent penalty in the welfare system.

I acknowledge that most of One Parent Families Scotland's work is on the financial implications of lone parenthood and the monetary support that is available, and that most of its lobbying is on additional financial funding. However, it would be remiss of me not to highlight its excellent work to support lone parents in engaging and parenting their children. Knowing how to communicate with a child when the other parent does something differently, or how to balance the effects of an absentee parent on a child, or how to ensure that a safe and secure environment is always there for them when, at times, it seems that it is not, are all issues that plague every parent. However, achieving them as a lone parent is a mammoth task. Without proper support, provided in the right way, many single parents are caught up in a vicious cycle of ever-decreasing possibilities.

I note, too, the "Poverty proofing for families in or on the edge of care" report, which One Parent Families Scotland produced in conjunction with The Promise Scotland back in August 2023. We are now nearing the mid-point of the implementation plan on keeping the Promise. I fear that, without a renewed push, it might not be fulfilled, especially if we do not come to terms with the link between one-parent families, child poverty,

and what happens to family finances when children are unable to live at home. I look forward to hearing tomorrow's debate on those issues.

The report considers the financial impact in that scenario, highlighting that there is an extremely detrimental impact of poverty on a family when a child enters care, and if they return from care, and a related gap in policy resources and service delivery.

If a family relies on social security benefits, family poverty is likely to be precipitated and/or exacerbated when the child is taken into care. Yes, we can and should do more to look at how and when benefits are provided, but we must also do more to ensure that families are not solely reliant on social security in the first place.

I know from my involvement with the Social Security and Social Justice Committee and our work on barriers to parental employment that limited options for increasing income from employment, lack of childcare options, transport flexibility and greater impacts of conditionality in the social security system are all issues that hit single-parent households, resulting in 38 per cent of children in one-parent households living in relative poverty.

We simply cannot keep ignoring the barriers to helping people help themselves. We must do more to acknowledge the problem and to find solutions. The provision of 1,140 hours of childcare is a great policy, but failings in implementation have meant that local childcare offerings are not suitable to sustain a full-time job. That needs to change. Changes and cuts to local transport services mean that it is simply not possible for many people to get to work on time, especially when inoperable childcare proposals are factored in. That needs to change.

It is imperative that we move the dial and make changes to our structures not only to support single parents to look after their child in the best way but to support them financially.

16:56

Martin Whitfield (South Scotland) (Lab): I, too, thank Karen Adam for bringing this debate here tonight. I also thank those who are joining us in the gallery and are watching remotely. It is a pleasure to join colleagues to celebrate a remarkable 80th anniversary of One Parent Families Scotland—a charity that has been a beacon of hope and support for countless single-parent families across our nation.

For eight decades, the organisation has dedicated itself to ensuring that single parents and their children have the resource, the guidance and the advocacy that they need to thrive in an ever-

changing world. One Parent Families Scotland began its journey at a time when society turned a blind eye to the struggle of single parents. Founded in the 1940s, its mission was simple yet profound: to keep families together, providing vital support to unmarried mothers—a phrase that is taken from its original name—and their children at a time when they faced significant societal stigma and hardship. Fast forward to today, and that compassion has blossomed into a wide-reaching network of family services that touches the lives of thousands of families throughout Scotland. However, families still live under that stigma today.

What makes One Parent Families Scotland truly special is its unwavering commitment to holistic family care. It understands that single parents face a unique set of challenges. Imagine a mother juggling work while ensuring that her children are safe and cared for, often feeling overwhelmed and isolated. Imagine a father returning home after work, who still has to find time to help with homework and prepare dinner, all the while worrying about making ends meet. That is the reality for many single parents today, who often find themselves bearing the burden of the financial strain, the emotional stress and the societal pressure all at once.

Through their family support programmes, young parent initiatives, welfare rights advocacy and financial guidance, One Parent Families Scotland provides not just advice; it provides a lifeline, empowering parents to build better futures for themselves and their children. It is not just offering services; it is offering hope and a sense of community. The charity's work is vital in breaking down the barriers, ensuring that single parents have access to the support that they need to navigate the very complex ways that their lives have developed.

Today, families across Scotland face unprecedented pressures, including rising living costs, the impact of austerity and the on-going challenges stemming from a pandemic that have made life particularly tough for single-parent households. Many grapple with the increasing cost of childcare, housing and living expenses.

One Parent Families Scotland is at the forefront of addressing those issues, and its campaigns—including the make the case and better off: universal credit campaigns—are vital in amplifying the voices of families. It fights tirelessly for the financial support that many single parents so desperately need and advocates for policies that will alleviate the burdens that they carry.

At the heart of the charity are the stories of real people—parents who face each day with resilience and determination. One mother recently shared how the support that she had received from One Parent Families Scotland helped her to

navigate the emotional turmoil of separation, providing not just practical advice but a community that understood her struggles. Each of those parents has a story to tell that is filled with struggle but also triumph, because One Parent Families Scotland stands beside them, offering practical assistance, a listening ear and a compassionate heart.

Let us celebrate the 80 years of One Parent Families Scotland and let us renew our commitment to supporting single-parent families across Scotland. Together, we can continue to build a future in which every family has the opportunity to thrive, nurtured by a community that cares. It is our responsibility as policy makers, community members and fellow citizens to ensure that single parents are not left to face these challenges alone. We must stand together, advocate for change and work towards a society in which every family can flourish.

17:01

Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green): I thank Karen Adam for her motion, for her opening remarks and for securing this important debate. I join her and other members in congratulating One Parent Families Scotland on its anniversary and its wonderful work.

Any family can become a one-parent family. Some are planned that way, and I hold great respect and admiration for those who are able to take on that commitment alone. However, others never have the chance to be anything else. Most one-parent families were once two-parent families, with partners who expected to share the joys and tribulations of making a home, caring for their children and watching them grow in a world of change and crisis. Whatever happened to change that—whether it was a long process or a sudden tragedy; whether it was separation or bereavement—could happen to any family of any size with children of any age. One Parent Families Scotland stands for those parents, whatever their experience of loss, grief, abuse, isolation or poverty.

The One Parent Families Scotland services, including those in Dundee, offer help with the practical challenges of being a parent alone, of work and childcare, of housing and energy, and of health and wellbeing. One Parent Families Scotland brings parents together in interest groups where they can share not only gardening, cooking or walking but experiences, support and empowerment.

Nationally, One Parent Families Scotland speaks with the voice of expertise—the expertise of real experience—in its research, policy and campaigns, building, as it says, a vital bridge

between single parents and decision makers. That bridge is needed more than ever. Every one of the blows that fall on the people of Scotland—those oppressions that we name as though they were natural events, such as the housing emergency and the cost of living crisis—falls most heavily on the shoulders of one-parent families, especially if, as is usually the case, that one parent is a woman.

As Karen Adam's motion notes, One Parent Families Scotland began in 1944 as the Scottish Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child. We can all imagine why it was needed, but are we really doing any better now? We have the two-child limit, with its crude and baseless assumptions; the daily stigma of means-tested school meals; the failure to make childcare and public transport affordable and accessible; and last week's decision to sacrifice effective rent controls to the landlord lobby. Those policies punish single mothers and their children just as cruelly as any wartime disapproval.

I join in the warm congratulations that were extended to One Parent Families Scotland on its anniversary. I applaud its important, encouraging and inspiring work in Dundee and beyond, and I join Karen Adam in recognising the strength and resilience of single parents across Scotland and beyond.

Resilience is what you have to find when you are repeatedly assaulted. It means that you keep getting back up again and again, which is what women—parents—do for the sake of their children, at least for as long as they can. Sometimes, they do not get back up again. Sometimes, the one-parent family becomes a no-parent family.

Here is a suggestion. What if, for the next 80 years, we stopped attacking single mothers and their children; stopped privileging those who exploit them; and stopped ignoring their needs when we develop budgets, policies and legislation? What if we made sure that they had the basic conditions in which to live, work and travel, and to feed their children, keep them warm and safe and give them what we would recognise as a happy childhood? No one should have to be resilient all the time.

17:05

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): I thank my colleague Karen Adam for bringing the debate to the chamber, and for her customarily powerful and moving opening speech. I also thank Stephanie Callaghan for her work in this field.

The debate is really a celebration of the 90 per cent of women—and the 10 per cent of men—who are raising their family single-handedly, often

against very challenging odds. It also celebrates One Parent Families Scotland on the charity's 80th anniversary—what a fantastic achievement. The charity helps lone parents to cope by providing essential services including welfare rights and financial advice, which—let us face it—can prove to be a minefield for the best of us.

In preparing for the debate, I had a look at the charity's excellent website. I can honestly say that every piece of advice that a parent could want is there, including a helpline for answers at the end of the phone and a chat service. Crucially, there is also advice for anyone who is a student and a single parent or anyone who becomes pregnant while studying. After all, being a parent should not be a barrier to achieving a full and rewarding career. With support and the correct advice, it is possible to make it work.

As the motion says, the charity was originally founded

"in the 1940s as the Scottish Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child"

with the aim of keeping

"unmarried mothers and their children together".

That strikes me as remarkable, when we think of what we now know was happening then and in the decades to follow, with babies being forcibly and cruelly removed from their unmarried mothers to be given up for adoption. Immediate respect and gratitude must go to One Parent Families Scotland for carrying on the pioneering and humanitarian work of the charity's original founder, and I am proud to wear the rosette tonight in acknowledgment of its amazing work.

As we have heard, the charity has offices in Glasgow, Dundee, Edinburgh, Falkirk and Lanarkshire. It employs 97 members of staff; supports more than 8,000 parents, children and young people annually; and provides welfare rights and financial advice that has benefited nearly 4,000 families, resulting in financial gains of more than £1.6 million for families. That is pretty astonishing.

We all know that parenthood can be difficult, even for couples who work as a team and share the responsibility for the massive decisions that have to be made daily. For single parents, however, that difficulty is much greater. In today's society, there is intense peer pressure among parents to provide expensive and commonplace items, such as mobile phones, sports equipment and much more, and I applaud the way in which lone parents can cope with that. We are living through a cost of living crisis, and there is a far higher likelihood that single-parent families will experience poverty in comparison with other households. Scotland's groundbreaking child benefit payment helps in that respect.

Of course, despite significant improvements since the 1940s, gender inequality remains a major cause of discrimination against many single mothers, who make up 90 per cent of lone-parent families. The stigma from decades ago, which Karen Adam talked about, might have gone but, sadly, discrimination remains in certain areas of society. As we have heard, single parents face unique challenges in combining the roles of sole carer and provider without the ability to pool resources with another adult. Therefore, organisations such as One Parent Families Scotland are a vital lifeline, and I cannot praise the work that they do highly enough.

I say as a final word to all the lone parents out there that no one underestimates the challenges that you face, but in spite of it all, you are doing great.

17:09

Stephen Kerr (Central Scotland) (Con): I congratulate Karen Adam on bringing the debate to the chamber, and on her eloquent and moving speech. Her description of her personal experience authenticates everything that she said, and I add my voice to hers in tribute to the work of One Parent Families Scotland.

One of my main reasons for deciding to seek election to public office in the first place was to promote my strong belief that strengthening the family is fundamental to a better society. In my estimation, no other issue is comparable in its importance. Strong families, in all their shapes and sizes, are the foundational unit of society. We know that the costs of family breakdown are enormous, and helping families to work things through and stay together in order to build a better life is the starting place for improving our nation. Social skills and life lessons are best developed within a functioning family, and society benefits tangibly when things such as caring, sharing and collective responsibility are learned in the safe laboratory of the home.

I believe, therefore, that we all owe our gratitude to those who dedicate themselves to supporting the family, especially one-parent families, in which one adult has to shoulder every responsibility. To those counsellors, social workers, mediators and grandparents who dedicate themselves to supporting marriages and families when the going gets tough, I say: thank you.

I would suggest that every public policy and piece of legislation be tested against its family friendliness. Does it help or hinder parents in their responsibilities? Does it make it easier or harder for families to stay together? In the main, although by no means exclusively, one-parent families have a mother and not a father, as was highlighted in

the previous speech. Most often, it is a single woman who does the caring and the nurturing, and the raising of children.

One of the crucial questions in our society that we ought to face up to is this: where are the fathers? Perhaps we should have a debate in this place that is dedicated solely to the subject of the role of fathers in families and in the raising of children, because too many children grow up without the good example and the parenting of a father. It is a complex issue, but it is fundamental to a healthy and prosperous society.

A survey this week revealed that almost half of all mothers who return to work after having a baby plan to quit their jobs in the following 12 months, because they are not satisfied with the support that they receive when they return to work. That is a dire statistic for single mothers.

Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Stephen Kerr: Of course I will.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Bob Doris.

Bob Doris: First, I should apologise, Deputy Presiding Officer, as I will not be present for the entire debate. No discourtesy is intended.

Mr Kerr makes an important point when he asks where the fathers are, and I want to name check Fulton MacGregor and the cross-party group on shared parenting that he convenes. There are positive role models out there for fathers; it is not just about talking the talk, but walking the walk, and Mr MacGregor has done a real solid job in bringing those issues to the Parliament.

Stephen Kerr: I am grateful to Bob Doris for that intervention, and I add my support for the cross-party group and the work of Fulton MacGregor.

Returning to the issue of single mothers, and mothers in general, finding it difficult to return to the workplace, I know from experience that if a business owner does not take the necessary steps to accommodate the demands of family life, they will, in time, lose the talent and goodwill that they need to build a successful business. The same is true at the macroeconomic level, because taking care of the family makes good business and economic sense.

Whenever anyone, or any organisation, gives essential support to families, especially when they are struggling, they are providing an invaluable social good. We are fortunate to have organisations such as One Parent Families Scotland contributing to the betterment of our society by supporting the family, in all its shapes and sizes, so consistently and effectively.

17:14

The Minister for Equalities (Kaukab Stewart):

I thank Karen Adam for bringing this important debate to the chamber, and I thank all the members who have taken part. I welcome the One Parent Families Scotland representatives who are in the public gallery.

Back in September 2022, I had the pleasure of attending and speaking at the launch of the One Parent Families Scotland report “Living without a lifeline” at the Scottish Storytelling Centre. I was struck then, as I am now, by the importance of tackling poverty, especially given the cost of the school day and the impact that stigma can have on one-parent families. I am therefore delighted to close this members’ business debate to celebrate the 80th anniversary of One Parent Families Scotland, which has worked tirelessly to support families to achieve their potential, to reach a decent standard of living and to contribute to Scottish society.

As Karen Adam highlighted, single-parent families make up a quarter of all families with children in Scotland. Over the years, One Parent Families Scotland has supported thousands of parents and children, and it continues to do so each year, making an intrinsic difference to the lives and future chances of generations of children across Scotland. The support and advice, and the strategies and tools, that the organisation’s dedicated staff provide have helped to empower parents and increase children’s resilience, confidence and academic achievement.

When the charity was formed all those years ago, single parenting was a taboo subject, which had a damaging impact on mother-and-child relationships. Thankfully, through the work of charities such as One Parent Families Scotland, attitudes have changed for the better. I therefore join my colleagues Stephen Kerr, Martin Whitfield and Maggie Chapman in paying tribute to and celebrating—as they did eloquently—the strength, love and resilience of single-parent families across Scotland, and the work that One Parent Families Scotland does with them.

The Scottish Government wants to ensure that every child has the nurturing care that they need to get the best start in life and to fulfil their potential. We want to protect parents and carers from stigma and give them the resources and the help that they need, where and when they need them, to ensure that children have what they require for healthy development.

We know that parents and carers are the strongest influence on a child’s life, and by helping parents, carers, families and communities to build better lives for themselves and their children, we can help to ensure that every child has the best

start in life. Being a parent or carer is one of the most rewarding and important roles that anyone can take on, and we recognise that the challenges are even greater for single-parent families, who are disproportionately impacted by issues such as poverty.

There can be no acceptable number of children living in poverty in Scotland, and ending child poverty is a national mission of the Scottish Government and the top priority of our First Minister. In our document “Best Start, Bright Futures—Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026”, we identify six priority family types that are at greatest risk of poverty. That includes lone-parent families, of which about 90 per cent are headed by women, and young mothers under 25. We know that both those groups are at considerable risk of poverty. We therefore recognise the critical role that advice services such as One Parent Families Scotland play across Scotland’s communities.

Key to tackling child poverty is helping people to understand their rights and seek solutions in a range of areas such as benefits, debt, housing and homelessness. By providing access to advice on income maximisation and debt management and other valuable support, the One Parent Families Scotland advice and information service is working with the Scottish Government to reduce child poverty across Scotland. We have provided more than £500,000 of funding this year to the service in recognition of its ambitions to improve and increase the financial wellbeing of single parents and their families.

We are also supporting One Parent Families Scotland with core funding. Since 2016, through our children, young people and families early intervention third sector fund, we have been providing more than £370,000 annually to support organisational costs, which enables One Parent Families Scotland to continue its vital work, because we want to ensure that every child has the best possible start in life.

I draw attention to Emma Roddick’s speech, in which she illustrated clearly how children can make demands on parents, who often have to balance those demands within their means. I take the opportunity to highlight the work of Parent Club Scotland, which provides, through its website, email programme and social media channels, supportive tried and tested tips and advice for low-income families to help parents with the everyday challenges and issues that they face.

Roz McCall raised the issue of single parents not being able to work and their need to have benefits while they cannot access the type of work that they need. Benefits provide an important lifeline and, although this Government does what it can, I take the opportunity to call on the UK

Government to abolish the two-child cap, which serves only to push hard-pressed families further into poverty and denies parents vital financial support that is needed to look after their children.

Rona Mackay was right to mention the game-changing Scottish child payment and the positive impact that it has had. I mention the value of the baby box, which provides very important resources in the early stages.

The Scottish Government will continue to work with fantastic organisations such as One Parent Families Scotland to support single-parent families and ensure that all children in Scotland grow up loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential. I congratulate One Parent Families Scotland on its remarkable 80 years of service to single-parent families across Scotland and simply say thank you.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Liam McArthur): That concludes the debate. Before we move to the next item of business, there will be a brief pause to allow members on the front benches to change places.

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month and World Pancreatic Cancer Day 2024

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Liam McArthur): The final item of business this evening is a members' business debate on motion S6M-14784, in the name of Clare Adamson, on pancreatic cancer awareness month and world pancreatic cancer day 2024. The debate will be concluded without any question being put. I invite members who wish to participate to press their request-to-speak buttons now or as soon as possible, and I invite Clare Adamson to open the debate.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament marks Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, which takes place every November, and World Pancreatic Cancer Day, which takes place on 21 November 2024; believes that, for decades, pancreatic cancer has been left behind, receiving just 3% of the UK cancer research budget; considers that an increase in long-term investment in such research could transform persistent low survival rates; welcomes Pancreatic Cancer UK's recent announcement of nearly £600,000 in funding for research taking place in Scotland into early diagnosis and treatment for the disease; acknowledges that pancreatic cancer is tough to detect and diagnose and understands that, once diagnosed, only three out of 10 people get any treatment, the lowest proportion of all cancer types; acknowledges that half of people die within three months of diagnosis; believes that, once diagnosed, people often face obstacles getting the information and care that they need to be well enough to have treatment, with scarce patient experience data and many people feeling "written off", with no support plan in place or help to manage symptoms; understands that, at present, there are shortages in the availability of pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT), directly affecting the quality of life for people living with pancreatic cancer and other conditions; commends the health professionals and pancreatic cancer charities coming together to develop holistic support and guidance on what to do if a patient is running low or cannot get PERT; further commends all of the charities and activist organisations, and their dedicated supporters, on what it sees as their tireless efforts to improve outcomes for people with this condition, and wishes everyone involved with Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month and World Pancreatic Cancer Day every success in raising awareness of this devastating disease.

17:23

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): It is an unusual night when we have two members' business debates back to back. Nonetheless, we have had a sea of purple all evening in the gallery with those who have come to recognise and mark both world pancreatic cancer day, which is on 21 November 2024, and the fact that November marks pancreatic cancer awareness month.

I welcome to the gallery many people from Pancreatic Cancer UK with whom I have

campaigned over the years—Dawn Crosby, Carol O'Connor, Ian Thomson, Wendy Thomson and Brian Green—and those from Pancreatic Cancer Action Scotland who have joined us this evening—Fiona Brown, Ross Carter and, as always, the person who has inspired me to do this every year, Lynda Murray.

We know and have discussed many times the issues around pancreatic cancer, why it is such a problematic cancer and why it is so important that we shine a light on the issues around it every year. It feels as though pancreatic cancer has been left behind, receiving just 3 per cent of the UK cancer research budget. Pancreatic Cancer UK's recent announcement of almost £600,000 in funding for research that is taking place in Scotland into early diagnosis and treatment for the disease is very welcome. The announcement acknowledges how important that research will be, as only three out of 10 people will receive any treatment after diagnosis, which is the lowest proportion of all cancer types. It also acknowledges that, as we know, half of people with the cancer will die within three months of diagnosis.

This year, we have also been alerted to the fact that there is a shortage in available pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy—PERT—that will directly affect the quality of life of those who are living with pancreatic cancer and other conditions. We commend the health professional and pancreatic cancer charities for coming together to develop holistic support and guidance on what to do if a patient is running low on or cannot get PERT. I will discuss that further later.

As always, we must thank the campaigners in the gallery who have worked tirelessly during the year to raise funds and to educate the public on the symptoms of pancreatic cancer. We also thank those brave campaigners who, over the years, have shared the experiences of their loved ones as well as their own situation with pancreatic cancer. Very few survivors can come and speak to us, for all the reasons that I have just outlined, but there are people who have managed to survive for more than 10 years who are a very small part of the pancreatic cancer community.

As always, we need to shift the narrative to better outcomes for people who are living with pancreatic cancer. The devastating impact that it has on someone's personal life needs to change. It is the deadliest common cancer in Scotland. Only one in four people who are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer survives beyond one year, and the five-year survival rate in Scotland is only 7.3 per cent. Across other cancers, the average five-year survival rate is 69 per cent. That is the quantum and scope of the issue with pancreatic cancer and the reason why we have to shift the dial for those who have been diagnosed.

Approximately 900 people in Scotland are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer every year, and there are more than 10,500 cases in the UK. It is the 12th most common cancer in Scotland, but it is responsible for the sixth-highest number of cancer deaths—a disproportionate effect for those who are suffering with it.

Hard-to-treat cancers must be a priority, and there is a clear need for research. Cancer Research UK notes that the overall survival rate for most cancers has doubled in the past 50 years, but survival rates for pancreatic cancer have barely shifted. More than 80 per cent of people with pancreatic cancer are diagnosed at a late stage. That emphasises the need for targeted research so that we can better understand the pathology of the disease and improve the treatment pathway and patient support.

I mentioned PERT shortages earlier. PERT is a capsule that can help people to manage the digestive symptoms of pancreatic cancer, cystic fibrosis, neuroendocrine cancer and pancreatitis. It is taken with food and it replaces the vital enzymes that help people to break down and get nutrients from their food, as that does not happen naturally for people with such illnesses.

The absence of PERT can have a devastating impact on people's lives. Without access to it, people can become malnourished—can even literally starve to death. In the past nine months, there have been intermittent shortages across the United Kingdom, which is expected to be an issue until at least 2026. That is due to a lack of the raw material that is used to make PERT, and limited manufacturing capacity. We are therefore calling on the UK Government to develop a national action plan to proactively address and resolve PERT shortages. The UK Government must ensure that the UK's PERT market share matches the demand for PERT across the UK. That includes ensuring that alternative brands of PERT are imported if required.

I will mention the Scottish hepato-pancreato-biliary—Scot HPB—pathway pilot. Ross Carter, the clinician who has been fundamental to that pilot, is in the public gallery this evening. The HPB cancers pathway is a diagnostic pathway pilot that offers people who are diagnosed with pancreatic or liver cancer in Scotland the biggest hope of accessing treatment as quickly as possible. I restate that most pancreatic cancer patients are diagnosed at a very late stage. I have worked with and had the pleasure of seeing the work that Dr Carter and Lynda Murray have led for a long time. The Government extended the pilot, with a view to its being embedded into the pathways for cancer. I am interested in hearing the minister's view on what might happen next with that pathway.

Again, I thank the people in the gallery for all the work that they do in highlighting the issue and the challenges of pancreatic cancer and in educating people on its symptoms, to ensure that most people are aware and get the help that they need in a timely manner.

17:32

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I thank Clare Adamson for securing the debate and for her campaigning on the issue, which is an important one. A number of us have spoken in what has become an annual debate. I welcome the fact that we have such a commitment. As Clare Adamson did, I welcome to the public gallery the many campaigners who have pushed the Parliament in the right direction on this issue. It is important that we recognise them as advocates and crusaders around pancreatic cancer. We know why they do that, and we know why many of us want to speak in the debate: each of us will have lost a family member, a work colleague, a family friend or—given our job—even constituents. That is why we want things to improve. All of us, across all parties, agree on that.

In most years, the debate around pancreatic cancer awareness month will be consensual and will point to the making of welcome progress. However, I feel that this year is different, having spoken to campaigners and read the briefings that we have received ahead of the debate, which raise serious concerns, as Clare Adamson mentioned, about the Scot HPB pathway and the future opportunities that it presents. We need to raise those concerns in the debate. In the time that I have, I will concentrate my remarks on that.

As co-convener of the cross-party group on cancer, I have been made aware of the concerns about a move to a regional approach rather than the national approach to pancreatic cancer that was being developed by the Government very effectively and was welcomed by many people working in the cancer community. However, it feels as though that approach is now under threat. Pancreatic Cancer Action's briefing for the debate makes specific reference to the fact that, in December 2023—a week before Christmas—the Scottish Government surprisingly announced that it was cancelling the project, despite significant improvements in outcomes for patients. Thanks to campaigning by patients—many of whom are in the public gallery—the Government eventually reversed that decision and restarted the project.

If we fast forward to now, we see the Golden Jubilee and other hospitals being ruled out as national hosts, with a push back towards having a regional model. I think that that would be a step backwards and hope that ministers, in response to this debate, will consider where we are today and

how that national approach can be taken forward and developed as part of the Government's national cancer strategy. We know the positive outcomes that that could have, particularly when treatment decisions are taken by multidisciplinary teams treating pancreatic cancer.

We have heard the call for action from charities and campaigners. I hope that, in responding to the debate, the minister will look at what has been outlined. I know that she has had briefings and is acutely aware of the concerns and hope that she will also agree to meet to discuss the situation with charities and with the members who have spoken in this debate. Scotland has made great progress, some of it world leading, but I am concerned that that is now at risk. We must deal with that and ensure that we get back on track.

As Clare Adamson outlined, the outcomes for pancreatic cancer patients are still not improving quickly enough. That model could have addressed that, so we must ensure that it is protected and taken forward.

I welcome the debate and the opportunity for us to raise the issue. I again congratulate all those involved in the awareness week and thank them for the work that they do all year round. We must ensure that that is celebrated and acknowledged by Parliament.

17:36

Marie McNair (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP): I am grateful to my colleague Clare Adamson for securing this incredibly important debate during pancreatic cancer awareness month and ahead of world pancreatic cancer day. Since being elected in 2021, I have spoken in three debates brought to the chamber by my colleagues Clare Adamson and Willie Coffey during pancreatic cancer awareness month, and I will always feel that it is incredibly important to speak on the issue. I also extend my sincere thanks to wonderful charities such as Pancreatic Cancer Action Scotland and Pancreatic Cancer UK and to the other dedicated organisations that are at the forefront of raising awareness and fighting for better outcomes for those with pancreatic cancer.

Unfortunately, pancreatic cancer is a silent killer, because its early symptoms are difficult to spot, and only one in four people who is diagnosed with pancreatic cancer survives for more than a year. That is why raising awareness is so crucial to early detection and to improving patient experience and overall outcomes. It is therefore important to reiterate the common symptoms, which are: a yellow tinge to the skin or eyes; darker urine; paler poo; itchy skin; loss of appetite or losing weight without trying to; feeling tired or having no energy; a high temperature; and feeling hot or shivery.

Education is a powerful tool in the fight against pancreatic cancer and, although our understanding of the disease is somewhat limited, we know that factors such as smoking, obesity or a family history of the disease can increase the risk of getting it.

According to Pancreatic Cancer UK, about 900 people are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in Scotland each year and more than 10,500 are diagnosed across the UK. They are our loved ones, friends and community members. Those figures are bleak, but it is important to highlight them so that we can call more urgently for greater action, because we need to do more.

Despite those challenges, there are glimmers of hope. We in Scotland are fortunate to have some of the best researchers and medical institutions working tirelessly to fight the disease. It was good to read about the University of Glasgow and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's recent pancreatic cancer research programme, which will evaluate a new drug combination as a first-line treatment for patients with metastatic pancreatic cancer. That is a really important step in the pursuit of new treatments to improve the outcomes for individuals who are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and I really hope that it will prove to be successful.

The Scottish Government is committed to making progress through the Scottish HepatoPancreatoBiliary Network, which has been awarded £653,000 over two years to redesign the pancreatic and liver cancer treatment pathways. It is the first service in the United Kingdom to deliver a national approach to improving the pathways of both pancreatic and hepatocellular cancer patients. The project has resulted in significant improvements in patient care, across all 14 health boards, in the majority of performance indicators that are measured. It is welcome that consideration is being given to exploring the options for sustained delivery of its positive outcomes after March 2025.

I conclude by paying tribute to my constituents who have sadly lost their lives because of pancreatic cancer: Helen, Donald, Billy and Christine will be forever missed by family, friends and loved ones, but they will never be forgotten. We must work together in their memory, and in the memory of others, to do everything that we can to raise awareness of this disease and to push for better survival rates.

17:40

Carol Mochan (South Scotland) (Lab): I thank Clare Adamson for bringing the debate to the chamber. On behalf of Scottish Labour, I mark pancreatic cancer awareness month and world

pancreatic cancer day, which, as we have heard, takes place on 21 November.

Raising awareness of illnesses such as pancreatic cancer is absolutely pivotal in ensuring early diagnosis and improving prognosis. During my three years in the Parliament, Clare Adamson has truly played her part in that regard, and I thank her for doing so. In one of the very first debates in which I participated, I shared my story of a close family friend's experience. I have been here for other such debates in the years since, and I appreciate how often Clare Adamson brings the issue to the chamber.

The key point that I will make is that the situation is urgent. Others have mentioned the reasons why, which I will go over, but we must make advancements in the treatment options and address the health inequalities in what is often a very late-diagnosed condition. As we have heard this evening—it is worth saying it again—80 per cent of people with pancreatic cancer are diagnosed at a late stage and more than half of people die within three months of diagnosis. We can see why much needs to be done to raise awareness of symptoms and that the Government has a huge responsibility to ensure that the national health service is in a position to encourage and support research efforts and to do important work around early diagnosis.

We know that there must be urgent changes to funding in Scotland for research into pancreatic cancer. Many of the briefings make that point to members, and I am sure that the minister will have heard that, too. I hope that she will respond to that point in her closing remarks.

As the motion states, the £600,000 of funding for early diagnosis and treatment is very welcome, but we must have confidence that there will be more and continued funding of the research part of the NHS. I read the briefing notes on that, and I noted that the importance of research to advancements in treatment cannot be overstated. I thank all the researchers and, of course, the patients and families who participate in the research and contribute to that life-saving and valuable work.

I also thank the various organisations that have contacted me and other members ahead of today's debate with their briefings. They highlight the sheer scale of the challenge that we face and the fact that we must move forward with some urgency on pancreatic cancer care.

Like Miles Briggs, I ask the minister to respond on the potential closure of the national service that is known as the Scot HPB national care pathway. From what I have read in the briefings and in other papers, there does not seem to be any commitment after March 2025. It is important for

us to understand what the Government is considering. The concern is that, if the service reverts to regional guidance, regional variation will reappear and health inequalities will continue to worsen, because funding is precarious.

Members will know that I repeatedly raise the issue of health inequalities in the chamber. We know that those in our most deprived communities are more likely to get cancer and, tragically, to die from it. I know that we all agree that that is absolutely unacceptable, so I ask the minister to consider whether we can do anything to make that situation better, because if we can, we should do it. I hope that the minister and the Government are making successful decisions on that point.

I thank Clare Adamson and other fellow members who have contributed to the debate.

17:45

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): I thank my colleague Clare Adamson for bringing this important debate to the chamber this year and for her very informative speech. I also thank all those who offered us briefings for the debate to help us get across the message about pancreatic cancer. As we all know, November is pancreatic cancer awareness month, and I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak in this annual debate and to show my support.

We have heard from members across the chamber about their personal experiences as well as those of their constituents. Every year, I mention my mother, who died from this awful disease in 1985. She went far too soon, at only 52 years old. I feel that I have lived alongside that cancer for the past 40 years, and I just want to tell the minister that I do not intend to let go.

As we have heard, pancreatic cancer is probably the most stubborn cancer in Scotland, and it is important for us as elected members to use this platform to raise public awareness. Repeating the symptoms to look out for is really important, because catching the disease early could be critical.

The difficulty is that a person who might have pancreatic cancer might not have any noticeable symptoms at all, or their symptoms might be really difficult to spot. My colleague Marie McNair mentioned a few of them. Some typical symptoms might be loss of weight, loss of appetite, indigestion and nausea, and even a yellowing of the eyes, which is a pointer to possible jaundice. The clear message to people is to get in touch with their general practitioner if they have any concerns. It is not certain that those symptoms mean that they have the disease, but the earlier they get checked, the better.

The fact is that 70 per cent of people with the cancer never get any treatment, and Scotland seems to be one of the worst in that regard—I do not understand why. After all, getting checked and treated early can improve survival rates for this incredibly stubborn disease.

As for what has been done to try to overcome it, I note that, in 2023-24, Cancer Research UK spent more than £31 million in Scotland, £9 million of which was on pancreatic cancer. Results of its trials showed that chemotherapy after surgery for pancreatic cancer can almost treble short-term survival for people with the disease.

Pancreatic Cancer UK's Scot HPB pilot, which members have mentioned, resulted in significant improvements across all the measured key performance indicators for pancreatic cancer patients. Improvements such as reducing the waiting time between imaging and starting patient treatment from 54 days to 38 days, reducing the wait time for patients with initial suspicion of cancer to diagnosis and speeding up how quickly patients receive contact from a specialist HPB nurse are part of the basket of actions that can help improve survival rates.

Moreover, Pancreatic Cancer UK has awarded almost £500,000 to researchers at the University of Glasgow to uncover why pancreatic cysts develop into pancreatic cancer, which around 10 per cent of pancreatic cysts apparently do. Given that just over 292,000 people in Scotland over the age of 60 have a pancreatic cyst, a frightening 29,000 people could go on to develop pancreatic cancer, so understanding how cysts develop into cancer is crucial if we are to reduce the number of such cases.

I cannot emphasise enough the need to maintain the successful research that we already know is working, and I firmly hope that the Scottish Government will be able to give some assurances on that today, if possible. Every year, the research seems to make good progress.

Once again, I thank my colleague Clare Adamson for bringing the issue to the Parliament's attention. I am delighted to have once again made a contribution to this incredibly important subject this year.

17:50

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): I thank Clare Adamson for bringing this members' business debate to the chamber.

It is important that we raise awareness of all cancers and not try to hide the subject under the carpet, as we did in the past when we talked about "the big C". It was as though, if we did not mention it, it might go away.

Sadly, that is most definitely not the case when it comes to pancreatic cancer, which, as we have heard, is one of the six less survivable cancers. In Scotland we need urgent action leading to earlier and faster diagnosis, faster pathways and greater investment in research. It goes without saying that the work of the less survivable cancers task force has been nothing short of remarkable and should be commended.

As we know, the less survivable cancers are cancers of the lung, liver, brain, oesophagus, pancreas and stomach. Annually, 9,000 people are diagnosed with a less survivable cancer in Scotland, and, tragically, some of them face only a 16 per cent chance of surviving for five years.

What is encouraging is that Scotland is starting to lead the way in tackling such cancers, although we can never become complacent in this battle. Considerably more needs to be done to identify them, and that should be a strategic priority in the 10-year cancer strategy. As has been mentioned, we need earlier and faster diagnosis, as that will lead to patients being treated much more quickly.

We as MSPs must raise awareness of less survivable cancers not just during awareness week, which runs from 13 to 17 January, or on world pancreatic cancer day on 21 November, when we will all once again wear purple. We must do so whenever possible, as on this occasion.

The current key area of concern is making progress on improving pathways for people with pancreatic and liver cancer. Unfortunately, half of those diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in Scotland die within three months. The figures make grim reading. Every year, 880 people are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, with 810 of them likely to die.

Sadly, the survival rate is not great, with only almost three in 10 people surviving for a year or more. Late diagnosis is a common and hugely important factor that influences the long-term outcome. Identification of the cancer at an advanced stage, as happens in the majority of cases, means that the number of treatment options and people's survival chances are reduced.

The Scottish care and co-ordination service for hepatobiliary pancreatic cancers provides a very important solution to improving outcomes for people with liver and pancreatic cancer. We can take some comfort in the knowledge that Scotland is leading the way in delivering and supporting expedited diagnostic pathways that will improve outcomes for those cancer emergencies.

There is also much-improved communication in relation to the speed with which GPs inform patients. They get informed after as little as one day—down from 31 days—with treatment

pathways shortened by an average of 37 per cent. Specifically, the time for GP communication for pancreatic cancer is down 75 per cent, from eight days to two.

The task force is now urging us to support the Scottish HPB cancer service as a national initiative, instead of reverting to a regional model that, historically, has been less effective. I certainly do not want people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in Dumfries and Galloway being pointed to a palliative care solution rather than an operative solution because of the financial implications, while a patient in Edinburgh might be treated completely differently.

Equity of access is, of course, the key reason for a national approach. A national model will ensure uniform care across all regions; help to reduce the health inequalities that affect many people who live in rural areas; and improve cancer outcomes throughout Scotland. A single well-supported national team will be more sustainable than roles being replicated across regions; after all, a shift to regional delivery runs the risk of inadequate staffing and might lead to service gaps.

As we are aware, Scotland has faced record long cancer waiting times, about which the SNP Government should hang—and has hung—its head in shame, and I hope that the co-ordinated pathway proves to be a step towards addressing those delays. The nationwide roll-out of the Scottish HPB pathway is vital to guaranteeing waiting times and equality of access to care for patients with liver and pancreatic cancer, and will signal what should be the Scottish Government's commitment to high-quality accessible cancer care for all.

We should also welcome the advice of experts and whole-heartedly provide them with the support and financial investment necessary to give people a fighting chance against this cancer.

My contribution to the pancreatic cancer debate has largely featured facts and figures, but that does not change the fact that we must put friends and family at the centre of our thoughts. I have committed to contributing to the debate on pancreatic cancer every time that it is brought to the chamber, in memory of my good friends, Mark Caygill and Peter Murray Usher, who were taken far too quickly by pancreatic cancer and are dearly missed.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Carson. I call Jenni Minto to respond to the debate, on behalf of the Government, for around seven minutes.

17:56

The Minister for Public Health and Women's Health (Jenni Minto): I thank my colleague Clare Adamson for bringing the motion to the chamber today and reminding us of the impact that pancreatic cancer can have on all of us. I think that every member who contributed talked about somebody in their lives who was lost to pancreatic cancer, and I have lost close friends, too.

I thank Pancreatic Cancer UK, Pancreatic Cancer Action Scotland and the range of other pancreatic cancer charities for their continued efforts to raise awareness and to support people who face pancreatic cancer. As Clare Adamson and other members did, I welcome their sea of purple to the Scottish Parliament.

I also thank colleagues for sharing such valuable contributions to the debate. Willie Coffey and Marie McNair both listed the symptoms. That is really important, because we can use our positions to let people know what the symptoms are. Before I spoke in a similar debate in my first year in Parliament, the sister-in-law of one of my constituents had given me the salient piece of advice that we should recognise and listen to changes in our bodies and do something about them.

As has been mentioned, the Scottish Government published our ambitious 10-year cancer strategy in June last year. We remain determined to improve cancer survival rates and provide excellent and equitable care for all people who face cancer. The strategy takes a comprehensive approach to improving patient pathways in cancer, from prevention and diagnosis right through to treatment and post-treatment care. We continue to focus on improving the outcomes of the less survivable cancers, including pancreatic cancer, and I pay tribute to the Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce.

As Willie Coffey and other members said, research and innovation are essential if we are to continue to develop new and effective approaches to improve diagnosis and treatment of pancreatic cancer. Through our chief scientist office, the Scottish Government supports grant and fellowship schemes for health research in Scotland. We are funding a clinical academic fellowship and, alongside NHS Education for Scotland, we have recently provided funding for a postdoctoral clinical lectureship. Both those roles are at the University of Glasgow and involve research that relates to pancreatic cancer.

The chief scientist office also provides a range of funding and support through NHS Research Scotland, which allows health boards to host and participate in clinical research studies and trials. That helps to foster a strong research culture in

our NHS, and we are supporting a range of clinical studies that are investigating different treatments for pancreatic cancer.

In partnership with Cancer Research UK, we co-fund the experimental cancer medicine centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Those centres form part of a UK-wide network that supports the delivery of early-phase cancer studies.

I welcome Pancreatic Cancer UK's research investment of more than £1 million in Scotland, and I was pleased to hear its recent announcement of nearly £600,000 to support research into early diagnosis and treatment. As Clare Adamson and Carol Mochan said, that is life-saving and valuable work.

As we know, November is pancreatic cancer awareness month. To mark that and world pancreatic cancer day, we will again light up St Andrew's house in purple on 21 November. As Willie Coffey said, raising awareness of pancreatic cancer and its common symptoms is crucial in detecting this devastating cancer early, to ensure the most appropriate care and optimal experience for people with pancreatic cancer.

We recognise how important it is that people are diagnosed and supported through treatment and care as quickly as possible. As Finlay Carson and other members said, late diagnosis is a concern, which is why the Scottish Government continues to invest in our detect cancer earlier programme, because we understand that the earlier cancer is detected, the easier it is to treat.

We reran our successful awareness campaign "Be the early bird" back in August. That campaign aims to reduce the fear of cancer and to empower and encourage those with possible symptoms to act as early as possible.

By continuing to invest in cancer diagnostics and waiting times, we are striving to detect cancer earlier and faster. We are optimising diagnostic pathways and will activate an additional rapid cancer diagnostic service early next year, which will bring the national total to six. It is important to recognise that the rapid cancer diagnostic services are finding cancer faster and that human papillomavirus cancers, which include pancreatic cancer, are one of the most commonly identified cancers through those services, making up 17 per cent of them in a recent evaluation.

We acknowledge the dreadful impact that a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer can bring to the person who is facing the disease and to their family. The importance of person-centred care cannot be stressed enough. It ensures that all patients get access to support throughout their cancer journey and that their voices and needs are heard.

The Scottish Government continues to support the single point of contact programme in 12 sites across Scotland. The programme sets out to make sure that all people who are facing cancer have a constant point of contact that they can continually refer back to. That is so important in improving the patient's experience as they progress through investigation, treatment and post-treatment support. The single point of contact will ensure that patients receive timely and accurate advice on their appointments, tests and results. It will also offer them the opportunity to discuss the non-clinical support that is available, which includes linking them with other organisations that can provide the support that is needed. We have commissioned Healthcare Improvement Scotland to consider how best to scale up that approach to benefit all patients.

As was highlighted earlier, we have invested in the pilot Scottish care and co-ordination service for hepato-pancreato-biliary cancers as a potential way of delivering pathway improvements. Our initial investment in that pilot was extended for a further year to March 2025 to allow us to consider how best to take forward the learning from that work. Following an extensive appraisal, we are actively considering how best to improve patient pathways in an equitable, evidenced and sustainable way. I appreciate the points that have been made tonight, and I understand that the cabinet secretary is meeting the Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce, Pancreatic Cancer UK, Pancreatic Cancer Action and the British Liver Trust later this month. I am also happy to meet the task force, but that meeting is in the diary.

I make clear the Scottish Government's enduring commitment to improving pancreatic cancer awareness. In doing so, we can improve early diagnosis rates as well as the patient's experience and overall outcomes. It is crucial that we continue to raise awareness of cancer symptoms—particularly of less survivable cancers such as pancreatic cancer. I gratefully thank all those who are helping to do so.

Meeting closed at 18:04.

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