



# Alyn Smith

## Members March 2013

## Dear Friend,

Welcome to my latest – and first of 2013 – edition of my newsletter for fellow SNP members.

This is going to be a big year for the party, the movement, the country and for Europe.

The great debate on independence is starting to gather pace and it will continue to get more intense the closer we get to our date with destiny in Autumn next year.

There's a lot of hard work ahead for all of us, but I'm confident we will win a Yes vote.

I'm writing this newsletter just after an opinion poll has shown a swing towards independence – this is great news.

Polls, though, can be fickle, and we certainly shouldn't rely on them. We really need to pay attention to the people we are speaking to on the high streets and on doorsteps the length and breadth of the country.

For me, the underlying message from the majority of people I have met while out campaigning with Yes Scotland is that they are still undecided and 'waiting for a bit more information'.

I've heard this everywhere - Glasgow, Edinburgh, the Borders, the Highlands – and it fills me with confidence.

We know that this referendum can and will be won - our arguments and positive vision for our country will triumph over the barrage of negativity from the No campaign.

In a newsletter last year I talked about my vision for our country - a place with pride in itself; a burning desire for social justice; the elimination of child poverty.

**“ We really need to pay attention to the people we are speaking to on the high streets and on doorsteps the length and breadth of country.. ”**

I want a land where ambitions can be realised, families no longer fear for the future of their children and all can share in community and prosperity.

That vision – a vision that unites us as a party and a movement – is becoming clearer and closer to becoming a reality. This can be a great year and I look forward to working with all of you.

**I hope you find this newsletter useful and as always, please do not hesitate to get in touch. All the contact details are on the back page, as well as my website and facebook and twitter accounts. And don't forget you can register for regular updates at [www.alynsmith.eu](http://www.alynsmith.eu)!**

**Yours for Scotland**



**Alyn Smith MEP**



The Greens | European Free Alliance  
in the European Parliament



# Alyn Backs Tighter Labelling As Horse Meat Scandal Grows

The recent discovery of horse meat in many products on sale in UK supermarkets has reignited calls by Alyn for a mandatory system of country origin labelling on all EU meat products.

A long-time campaigner on the issue, he said: "Incidents such as the horse meat saga, and the reports of halal produce containing pork, work to undermine the faith of EU consumers in the safety of the food chain.

"They strengthen calls for more a robust, precise and compulsory method of food labelling which clearly identifies the origin of the product.

"By the place of origin being clearly labelled on all meat products, consumers would have full confidence in the product that they are buying."

The move – which would require legislative proposals from the European Commission – would likely bolster Scotland's meat industry given the high standard of our products.

"In the current marketplace, with concerns about the precise content of processed food, as well as carbon emissions and



**Alyn visits his local butcher to urge constituents to buy local**

food miles, consumers want to know where their food comes from," Alyn added.

"Scottish farmers, who are renowned for producing top quality produce, are in a strong position to benefit from this."

## Why Did The MEP Cross The Road?

The growth in hybrid and electric vehicles in recent years means traffic is becoming quieter and quieter.

This might sound like a good thing, but it means it can be harder to hear oncoming vehicles - something which can cause serious problems for the blind.

To highlight the problem, Alyn visited Guide Dogs Scotland so that he could experience the difficulty of crossing a road without being able to see the traffic around him.

Donning a blindfold, he deliberately stepped out into a busy Edinburgh road and attempted to cross over with the assistance of 18-month-old assistance dog Preston and instructor Gavin Neate from Guide Dogs Scotland.

After successfully completing the walk, Alyn said:

"Being led blindfold into the road was a pretty frightening experience, but it was something I was determined to do as I wanted to see what everyday life is really like for blind people.

"Of course I had complete trust in Preston and Gavin, but it made me appreciate two things - firstly, how important guide dogs are to blind people and secondly, just how useful it is for them to be able to hear traffic noise."

Alyn completed the walk shortly before the European Parliament backed measures for all vehicles to have a minimum noise requirement. The draft legislation will now move forward in the coming months.

Julie Millar, Engagement Manager for Guide Dogs Scotland, said that she was "delighted" to hear that MEPs had voted to introduce such a key change in the law.

She added: "Thanks to Alyn and all the other MEPs who supported the amendment and to everyone who helped us campaign on this issue."

# Victory For Scots Farmers In CAP Reform

The European Parliament's Agricultural Committee has finally signed off proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) from 2014 to 2020, with some key victories for Scotland's farmers.

The proposals will now move forward to the plenary session in Strasbourg within the next month.

Alyn, who is currently the only Scottish member of the influential committee, has welcomed the outcome.

Among the highlights for the Scottish farming community are "guarantees of support in black and white" for new entrants, said Alyn.

The proposal is not perfect however and some work will still be needed to be done before the package is finalised.

"But all in all, I think Scottish farming is sitting in a promising position for the next CAP" Alyn said.

## News In Brief

**The University of Edinburgh's recently launched European Society played host to Alyn and some of his Scottish MEP colleagues in a debate on the future of Scotland in the UK and the EU.**

In a packed-out hall in Edinburgh's impressive Old College, Alyn set out a positive vision for Scotland to have its own voice in the European Union. He rejected David Cameron's promise of a UK in-out referendum as nothing but "pandering to his south-east centric backbenchers."

Among the highlights of the debate was Alyn's rebuttal of Labour MEP Catherine Stihler, who claimed that in the hit TV show Borgen, Denmark received only a minor portfolio within the European Commission.

Alyn was quick to point out however that Borgen was fictional and that Denmark's Commissioner Connie Hedegaard was actually responsible for Europe's Climate Action – a somewhat substantive remit!

**A whopping 58 per cent of young Scots now back independence, a new poll for the Times newspaper has found.**

That is more than double the amount (27 per cent) of people of the same age group supporting independence back in October.

The overall poll was also welcomed by the SNP and Yes Scotland with support for independence increasing by four per cent and support for the UK falling by three per cent.

Alyn, who is Honorary President of the SNP's youth wing said, "This is fantastic news and shows that the best way forward for Scotland is through independence."

He added that momentum was clearly with the Yes campaign, saying "the closer we get to the referendum, the more and more people will turn towards the inspirational message of independence and the possibilities it will bring to our country."

**Alyn has backed a campaign to have the 2013 Noble Peace Prize awarded to the 15 year-old campaigner Malala Yousafzai, who has battled for girls' right to education in Pakistan.**

Malala paid a heavy price for her activism when she was cruelly shot in the head by the Taliban for her campaign. Bravely, she's vowed to continue her fight.

Alyn said: "This is a quite incredible young lady who has faced terrible violence and has remained courageous and determined in the face of it.

"In spite of the physical wounds she has suffered her spirit has appeared to be unshaken and she seems, in some ways, even stronger now and quite determined to carry on her campaigning. She is an inspiration to us all."

**Alyn has urged as many people as possible to take part in the Scottish Government's consultation on equal marriage in order to make their views known.**

He added: "This is a fundamental way of demonstrating that Scotland is a fair and tolerant society and people need to make sure their voices are heard."

You can make your contribution by visiting the website: [bit.ly/ncQt5p](http://bit.ly/ncQt5p)

Alyn has also written on the subject in Scotland on Sunday. See his piece here: [bit.ly/Ygn4HU](http://bit.ly/Ygn4HU).

## Getting In Touch

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