

# Are those in power adhering to the principles of their party?

**COMMENT**  
BY RF MORRISON

**M**ANY Scots are now querying whether those leading the Scottish Government are adhering to the core purpose of their party!

The Constitution of the SNP states: "The aims of the Party shall be (a) Independence for Scotland; that is the restoration of Scottish national sovereignty by restoration of full powers to the Scottish Parliament, so that its authority is limited only by the sovereign power of the Scottish People to bind it with a written constitution."

Comparing their performance with Westminster, Copenhagen or Washington with hundreds of years' experience behind them, the current Scottish Government has done pretty well on routine issues, but it has become bogged down in the distractions of devolution and the handling of Covid-19.

Holyrood retains its popularity by trying to be "nice" compared to those nasty Tories in Westminster. Well, that leaves lots of scope, but it won't cut the mustard with a substantial number of hard-headed Scots. The people in charge need to be realistically tough rather than just nice. Core economic problems such as land reform, council tax, pension fund investment in local business, etc, require some hard "unpleasant" decisions to fix them!

In preparation for self-determination, there needs to be tangible decisions forthcoming on issues such as currency, central bank, pensions, borders, defence, etc – all of which will require to be authorised by a written Constitution when Scotland is self-governing.

When a country becomes independ-



**Nicola Sturgeon's party must remember their raison d'etre**

ent it must stand firmly on its own feet in all respects. It may contemplate alliances and expect to do deals with friendly neighbours and other states, but its independence must in no way depend upon such cooperation.

Essentially, it is for the people of Scotland to compile this written Constitution for Scotland – not the politicians. It is for the people of Scotland to determine the kind of government they want and to clearly instruct their MSPs as to how it is to be achieved and managed.

No magic fairy is going to appear and do this for us. The time for debate and preparation is now so that everyone knows what to expect from independence. In the past, constitutions have been written by elites and moderated by politicians. Today we can do better than that. There is no prescription for a constitution and everyone can have their say. Just remember that it's about principles, the detail is for parliament and the civil service.

These principles will inform the way we govern ourselves and relate to one another in the community and the ethics and values we apply in conducting our economy, business and public finances, the way we educate the next generation and care for the present one; how we relate as a community yet retain our individuality and freedoms. It's all there in the Model Constitution. In short, it's about making sure our government does what the majority of the people want rather than what the party machines think best. And it's about doing this all the time, not just before the election.

That requires better interactive communication between the government and the governed and that is a key factor in a 21st-century constitution.

It's all there in the Model Constitution. You are now able to choose whether to comment or amend the proposals for this constitution, but you should regard voting for your preferences as importantly as any referendum or election. Only you as an individual can decide what it will be like living in an independent Scotland. Whether you presently support independence or the Union – don't leave it to someone else and then say you weren't consulted!

Constitution for Scotland is a registered Scottish charity with the

aim of advancing participative democracy within the community of Scotland.

On the CfS website we have had 7020 visits, 932 comments and 1063 votes so far – come hae yer say!

Article 13 proposes task specific, independent, non-partisan commissions. Their major responsibilities are to protect the sovereignty of the people to ensure that all state bodies observe democratic values and principles and to promote constitutional values and principles, providing accountability and objectivity to secure specific goals required for the well-being of the nation. These commissions to be comprised of representatives of both parliament and regional councils and utilising experienced advisors and people's assemblies as appropriate.

Furthermore, our elected representatives must be provided with the appropriate level of training their position requires.

It is proposed that there be an independent Electoral Commission with authority to ensure compliance with prescribed standards of political party and election finance, to set the standards and ensure accountability on how elections are run.

*In the next instalment in the series, we will look at Article 14: Natural Resources, Climate and Environment, Land Registration and Wildlife Protection.*

*To interested groups, the Constitution for Scotland team offer a guest speaker introduction, demonstration and Q&A session within your own Zoom meeting. Please contact [info@constitutionforscotland.scot](mailto:info@constitutionforscotland.scot) to arrange.*

*Ronnie Morrison is a Trustee of Constitution for Scotland*

## Police officer pleads guilty to murdering Sarah Everard

BY CRAIG MEIGHAN

A METROPOLITAN Police officer has pleaded guilty to murdering Sarah Everard in a case that has caused shock and outrage.

Wayne Couzens, 48, kidnapped Everard in a hire car as she walked home alone from a friend's house in Clapham, south London, on the evening of March 3.

The sexual predator, who had clocked off from a 12-hour shift that morning, went on to rape and strangle the 33-year-old marketing executive.

Police launched an urgent inquiry

after Everard was reported missing by her boyfriend Josh Lowth.

Couzens, a firearms-trained parliamentary and diplomatic protection officer, wiped his phone just minutes before he was arrested at his home in Deal, Kent, on March 9.

The following day – a week after she disappeared – Everard's body was found in a woodland stream in Ashford, Kent, just metres from land owned by Couzens.

The killing sparked protests at the rate of violence against women. Last month, Couzens pleaded



**Murderer Wayne Couzens**

guilty to Everard's kidnap and rape.

Yesterday, five members of her family were in court as he pleaded guilty to her murder when he appeared at the Old Bailey by video link from Belmarsh high security jail.

It can now be reported that Couzens, who joined the Met in 2018, had booked the hire of a Vauxhall Astra and bought a roll of self-adhesive film days before the murder.

At around 9pm on March 3, Everard set off on foot for the two-and-a-half-mile journey home,

chatting with her boyfriend by mobile phone on the way.

A camera attached to a passing marked police car captured her walking alone at 9.32pm.

Just three minutes later, a bus camera appeared to capture the moment she was intercepted by Couzens in Balham, south London.

Two figures could be seen standing by the hire car, which was parked on the pavement with its hazard lights flashing.

After snatching Everard, Couzens drove out of London, arriving in the area of Tilmanstone, near Deal, at 1am.