

Manifesto

An upgrade for Scotland

2011

PIRATE
PARTY UK



Forward by Finlay Archibald and Rob Harris

Finlay Archibald, no. 1 list candidate for Glasgow

I am proud to lead an excellent team of candidates on the Glasgow regional list for the Scottish Pirate Party. We have a forward-looking manifesto designed to raise new issues that are not being addressed by the old political parties. It puts civil liberties back on the agenda after the main parties seemed to have forgotten about them. Digital policy is becoming more and more important with advances in technology. It's time for politicians that 'get' it.

The results of their out-dated politics are heavy-handed laws that restrict our freedom and trample our privacy. A world in which the benefits that a connected society brings are remains out of reach. Vested interests all too often feel threatened by the modern world, and they are holding Scotland back. We want to change that. A vote for the Pirate Party on May the 5th will be a vote to give Scottish politics the upgrade it so badly needs

Rob Harris, no. 1 list candidate for West of Scotland

Two years ago a small group of people were so disillusioned with mainstream politicians that they decided they had to become politicians themselves and started the Pirate Party.

Today there are more people than ever disillusioned with mainstream politics. The refusal to recognise the differences between sharing and stealing shows our politicians are not fit for the 21st Century. The blanket condemnation of Wikileaks and whistleblowers demonstrates the inability to open up and embrace an honest and transparent government. The insistence of all main parties that we all need constant monitoring is proof that we deserve better.

The Pirate Party offers a realistic alternative. A vote for the Pirate Party is a message to mainstream politicians that you are one of the disenfranchised many.

A message that we don't want a country left behind with the 20th Century.

A message that Scotland is ready for new ideas, a new party, the Pirate Party."

Vote Pirate on May 5th.

A party that talks about issues that other parties ignore.

A party free from corruption and expenses scandals, free from lobbyists and party whips.

A party that is not left wing or right wing.

A party that is willing to listen.

A party that wants to give you more rights, not burden you with any more taxes.

In all other political matters, Pirate Party Candidates are encouraged to listen to their constituents, and make their own minds up, without the intervention of party whips, or political lobbyists.

The Scottish Pirate Party

Promoted by :

The Scottish Pirate Party of 22 Fairmount Road, Worcester, WR4 9FJ.

Created by Finlay Archibald, Rob Harris, Loz Kaye, Ed Geraghty, Gavin Meredith, Andy Halsall and members of the Pirate intended for digital and print distribution.

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Freedom of Speech section header image courtesy of Chris Willis via flickr..

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Freedom of Knowledge

Digital Policy

The Pirate Party is the only party that stands for radical reform of copyrights and patents, to ensure freedom of ideas and the knowledge based economy we need for the 21st century. We support a right to file-share for non-commercial purposes. We will strive to promote free culture in Scotland. We intend to put digital policy at the heart of Scottish politics where it belongs.

Broadband for all

Broadband Internet for all in Scotland should be a right not a luxury. We recognise that the future of the economy and jobs in Scotland will depend on a modern Broadband infrastructure supporting a free and open Internet.

We aim to end the "Digital Divide" in Scotland so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of being part of a connected information society. This would be achieved by encouraging the adoption of the recommendations in the Royal Society of Edinburgh's 'Digital Scotland Report' with the ambitious aim of making speeds of 16Mb/s accessible to all by 2015.

Promoting Free and Open source in the public sector

Pirate MSPs would push strongly for the adoption of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) alternatives to the dependence on proprietary systems throughout the public sector, wherever practical. As computers have more and more impact on our everyday lives, we believe it is vitally important that we think about the software that runs them. FOSS means giving users control over their machines, not big businesses, and the transparency to know what the software is actually doing. FOSS in the public sector can act as the first step to encourage FOSS as an option to individuals, business and society as a whole.

Open source- Saving Money, Saving services

Our policy of adoption of Free and Open Source Software would save millions of pounds each year, we estimate £40 per desk in the public sector. This money would be reinvested to reduce the impact of budget cuts on jobs and services.

Investing in Scottish technology

We would ensure that taxpayer's money spent on software would be reinvested in our FOSS communities and enterprises in Scotland, rather than handed over multinational software giants.

Opposing the Digital Economy Act

The Digital Economy Act is a major challenge to the freedom of the Internet. It is disproportionate to threaten to cut entire households off the web for allegations of file-sharing. It is Pirate Party policy to repeal sections 3 to 18 of the Digital Economy Act 2010. We would strongly oppose its implementation in Scotland.

Protecting the digital consumer

The Pirate Party is concerned about the spread of so-called Digital Rights Management technology, which restricts the use of an individual's own legitimate property, invades their privacy and retains control over their devices. The most ironic case being Amazon deleting copies of Orwell's 'Nineteen Eighty Four' from users devices without their knowledge or consent.

Our policy is to introduce a mandatory warning label on products that include DRM which will warn purchasers of the defects built into these products.

Digital Accessibility

We will promote the inclusion of accessibility features, such as subtitles and audio descriptions for the disabled. Our aim is to make content accessible for disabled people, which is especially important in the public sector.

We would introduce an obligation for publishers to provide a DRM-free copy of their product where necessary to allow the use of accessibility programs (for example, voice synthesizer software to "read out" an e-book to a visually impaired person).

Digitalise Library + Museum Content

We will encourage libraries and museums to digitise their content, and make it available online wherever possible. This applies especially to unique items (for example if a library has the only known copy of a book).

Better Computer Education in Schools

Scotland should be a world leader in computing education. We will encourage the adoption of open source software in schools, so that children won't be reliant in the future on buying a particular software package from a particular company. Schools should emphasise understanding of computers, including programming for those pupils with an interest or aptitude for it.

Schools should provide lessons for pupils on the safe use of the internet.

Patients not Patents

It is Pirate Party policy to abolish drug patents, which will reduce drug costs drastically, since all drugs will become generic. This would save the NHS a massive amount of money, and part of that saving will be used to subsidise drug research. We would strive to implement the use of generic drugs in Scotland.



Freedom of the Individual

Civil Liberties

We believe privacy of the individual should be respected at all times. It is time to put the civil liberties of the individual at the forefront of Scottish politics. Successive governments have eroded our privacy with draconian measures such as endless increasing CCTV surveillance and centralised government databases tied to National Entitlement Cards. Pirate MSPs will ensure that these concerns are heard in Holyrood.

CCTV - Ending Excessive Surveillance

We will reverse the trend of increasing proliferation of CCTV cameras and end the culture of blanket surveillance. The current situation is not conducive to a free society, and CCTV does not prove effective at preventing or solving the vast majority of crime.

We want to bring back common sense and proportionality to the use of CCTV. We have become the most watched nation on earth, with more CCTV cameras in the Shetland Islands than are operated by the entire San Francisco Police Department.

The Right to Private Communication

The citizens' right to private and confidential communication is vital and is in danger of being eroded.

We will forbid third parties from intercepting or monitoring communication traffic (i.e. telephone calls, post, Internet traffic, emails), and require specific warrants to be issued by a court before the police are allowed to monitor traffic.

Stopping 'Database Scotland'

The Pirate Party is concerned about privacy issues with the Scottish Government's "National Entitlement Cards", which include the Bus Pass and Young Scot Cards, and the national databases to which these cards are linked. Despite reassurances that these cards were voluntary, it has become commonplace for them to be required for access to education and public services.

We believe it is absolutely scandalous that previous governments have taken advantage of vulnerable groups in society, the young and the elderly, in order to introduce ID cards similar to the unpopular UK scheme, and to make vital public services dependant on them.

We would make sure that all citizens had access to any public service to which they are entitled without having to chose between that and their right to privacy.

Data Protection

We will significantly strengthen data protection laws, ensuring that companies holding personal information do give consumers more information about their rights, apply a reasonable level of security to data, and are be clear about their policies on data retention and amendment.

We will make it easier to apply to a court for compensation where data protection laws have been broken.

We will increase the penalties for any breaches of data protection laws, and we will allow the courts to apply these penalties to both the individuals and companies responsible, in proportion to the scale of the breach.



Freedom of Speech

Upgrading Politics

We want to make Scotland a world leader in freedom of speech. We believe that the Internet is instrumental to freedom of speech. We pledge to ensure that the Internet remains neutral and open.

Freedom of Information

We aim to make politics in the 21st century more transparent. We will require minutes of all meetings of officials on government business to be accessible through freedom of information requests and that all available information that could be released through a freedom of information request should be made public by default.

Open Data

We recognise the benefits of open data to communities and local businesses. We will expand the Open Government Licence to all government funded data and material. This will lead to the release of all maps, statistics and so on that have been paid for by the taxpayer in open formats, giving the public access to research they have already paid for. We see this as another step in the direction for open and transparent government.

The Right to Expose Wrongdoing

We recognise the value of whistleblowers to society, and we will defend the right of citizens to expose illegal practices in the workplace and elsewhere, and we will introduce a new legal right to be a whistleblower that will ensure that exposing corrupt or illegal activities will take precedence over contract law and copyright law.

The Pirate Party has shown its commitment to whistleblowers by being the only party to actively and consistently support Wikileaks. We would stand up for the rights of any Scottish whistleblower.

Libel Law and Free Speech

Scottish defamation law is a hindrance to free speech, although the vast abuses of England's libel law has overshadowed the flaws within our own. With reform of England's libel laws imminent, it is important to review Scottish defamation law to ensure Scotland does not replace England as a hotspot for libel tourism.

Accountable Politics

MSPs must be held to a higher standard of accountability than unelected citizens. To prevent abuses of their position, such as the hiding of expenses information, their right to privacy will be secondary to the public right to hold them to account for their actions.

We will expand the Open Government Licence to all government funded data and material. This will lead to the release of all maps, statistics and so on that have been paid for by the taxpayer in open formats, giving the public access to research they have already paid for. An exception will be made for cases that genuinely have national security or privacy concerns.

The output of the BBC, is funded by the licence paying public and should therefore belong to the licence paying public. We will amend the BBC's charter to prevent the BBC from using DRM technology, and to require the BBC to release all their content under a Creative Commons or similar licence. We pledge to maintain and expand the current list of important national events that cannot be exclusively broadcast by pay TV services.

We pledge to put into action the government's existing but widely ignored Open Source Action Plan, which would encourage the use of free software in the public sector, saving money, and making the UK less reliant on foreign software suppliers.