

10 questions to ask your candidates

Scottish Parliament elections 2021

While it's unlikely we'll see a return to candidates and campaign teams knocking on doors during the elections this year, you might still find yourself speaking to candidates in different ways - over the phone, or at online events.

If you're stuck for ideas of what to ask, we've pulled together some suggested questions or discussion points below. Many of these are linked to the policies that we've called on parties to back at this election. You can find out more about FoES election campaign on our website here

Question	Background	What to look out for
Do the policies in your party's manifesto achieve Scotland's 2030 emissions target?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Parliament, MSPs set a target to reduce emissions by 75% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2030. • 2030 is important because the UN's Climate Change body says this decade is crucial in avoiding the worst impacts of climate change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties should be designing their climate policies so that they achieve the 2030 target. It's not enough for candidates to just list some good sounding things they'll do - they should be confirming that these will deliver a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030.
Should the Scottish Government launch its own energy company that generates its own renewable electricity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 24% of overall energy production in Scotland comes from renewables • Scotland's energy system is currently a complex patchwork of private companies whose key priority is profit, not investing in creating green jobs and reducing emissions from energy. • A publicly owned energy company would do the opposite, focussing on the transition. With powers to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scottish Government have said they'll launch an energy company, but so far its not materialised. Their proposals so far haven't included generating renewable energy, instead buying energy and selling it on. To maximise impact, the POEC needs to start generating its own renewable energy

	<p>generate its own renewable electricity, it would create green jobs, including in manufacturing renewable energy infrastructure, help reduce energy emissions, and offer renewable energy at a low price, helping to tackle fuel poverty.</p>	
<p>What will you do to create jobs in the zero-carbon economy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rebuilding from the impacts of coronavirus and tackling the climate emergency can be done at the same time, if the Government make the right investments in creating jobs in zero-carbon industries - like public transport and renewable energy. ● A study by the STUC and Transition Economics suggested that upto 150,000 jobs could be created in “clean infrastructure” with the right investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talking about jobs in general is good for rebuilding from the pandemic, but unless they’re in zero-carbon industries it does little to tackle the climate emergency. ● Investment should particularly focus on creating jobs in areas like public transport, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. ● There has been a lot of investment in agencies that will offer support to people launching businesses in zero-carbon industries, but we need to see more direct government investment in these industries, as well as in creating demand for their products
<p>By what date should Scotland stop extracting oil and gas?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research commissioned by FoES shows that the 5.7 billion barrels currently being extracted will exceed the UK’s share of the Paris 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some candidates might refuse to say they’ll ever phase out oil and gas, or just focus on renewable energy, but we know we need to stop taking oil

	<p>Agreement goals, but the Government want to drill for a climate-busting 20 billion barrels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FoES believes we need to start a 'just transition', ensuring that winding down oil and gas is done in a way that protects people whose jobs or communities currently rely on fossil fuels • The Scottish Parliament's own pension fund invests in fossil fuels, and has no policy to change this 	<p>and gas out the ground if we're serious about tackling climate change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importantly, any transition must be carefully designed in collaboration with workers and communities currently working with oil and gas. This includes offering opportunities for people to retrain in and access green jobs
<p>How will you make public transport more accessible for people?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport is one of our highest sources of climate emissions, responsible for almost a third of our total annual emissions • A lot of transport pollution comes from private cars, so we need to move more people into sustainable transport - like trains and buses • Scotland's bus network saw a decrease of 100 million journeys in the ten years before the pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FoES is calling for parties to commit to free bus travel for everyone, and for more buses to be run by local authorities, and for free bus travel for all • Publicly owned bus services in the UK have higher customer satisfaction, and ensure that profits are invested into improving bus services rather than paying shareholders
<p>How will your party reduce the number of car journeys made in Scotland? / will your party commit to not building any major new roads?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite transport, and particularly private car use, being our biggest source of climate emissions, every year we spend hundreds of millions of pounds on expanding Scotland's road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most arguments in favour of expanding roads are actually arguments for reducing congestion on existing roads. The best way to do this is moving people onto active

	<p>network. Road expansion has been shown to only increase car journeys.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scottish Government recently announced a target to reduce the total kilometres of car journeys each year in Scotland by 20% by 2030 	<p>travel and public transport, not building major new roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates might want to talk about specific local roads that they want to make wider, but often don't discuss the alternative ways of easing congestion - like increasing active travel and public transport alternatives
<p>Will you deliver a wellbeing economy that prioritises improving the lives of people and the planet as much as economic growth?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our current economic model is based on pursuing economic growth, with little regard for the impact of those economic decisions on people and our planet. • Moving towards a wellbeing economy would see equal consideration given to how decisions improve the lives of people, and the planet, not just their financial impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates shouldn't just talk about how important wellbeing is, they need to commit to things like reforming the office measures of economic success and the Government's economic strategy to put wellbeing at the heart of decision making.
<p>Do you support a target of 100% of energy used in Scotland coming from renewables by 2030?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burning fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) is the key driver of the climate crisis, but only 24% of overall energy used in Scotland comes from renewables • Scotland's current target, of 50% of energy use to be from renewables by 2030, is outdated - and doesn't reflect the urgency with which we need to decarbonise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs are already at risk in the fossil fuel industry, but a report found that with a well managed transition can create three clean energy jobs for every oil and gas job at risk from winding down oil and gas production

<p>Do you support a halting on incinerating waste?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scotland has targets to stop sending biodegradable waste to landfill by 2025, however there is a risk that instead of going to landfill we just see waste diverted into incineration facilities. ● As well as producing emissions and ash, incinerating waste does nothing to tackle our wasteful linear economy where products are made, used, then thrown away. ● Scotland currently has five incinerators for household waste, 11 more are under construction or due to be built in next few years. ● The Welsh Government has announced a moratorium (legal pause) on building new large- scale incinerators, something that FoES want to see Scotland do as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instead of incineration, to avoid sending waste to landfill we should be looking at how we reduce waste in the first place - building a more circular economy where resources get reused and recycled, with fewer single use items ● Candidates may say we still need capacity to dispose of residual waste, but new incinerators will lock us into average contracts of 25 years giving local authorities no incentive to reduce our waste, increase recycling and promote reuse. ● Incinerators are more commonly known as energy-from-waste plants meaning they produce heat or electricity. However they still burn waste and some plants admit they currently don't provide power to any homes in the UK. (maybe word that differently)
<p>Will you commit to keeping fossil fuel lobbyists out of the UN Climate Conference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The UN's COP climate conference is coming to Glasgow in November. Previous conferences have seen fossil fuel companies given prominent access to world leaders, and voices of those currently affected by climate change sidelined. As a host nation, the Scottish Government should do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Climate change is a problem caused by fossil fuel companies. It's contradictory and morally inexcusable to offer them at the conference intending to resolve the problem they continue to perpetuate ● Voices of those already experiencing

	<p>everything it can to keep fossil fuel companies out of COP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political parties should commit to opposing fossil fuel sponsorship, and not meeting with fossil fuel lobbyists at the conference	<p>the impacts of the climate emergency are increasingly pushed to the sidelines, and hundreds of civil society observers were temporarily excluded from the last COP in Madrid.</p>
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