

# SNP Manifesto 2021

## What we're doing for our rural communities

Not all communities are the same. What works in urban Scotland may not be fit for our rural or island communities and vice versa. As Scotland's truly national party rural communities are at the heart of our plans to protect and support the NHS, to create jobs and opportunities for our young people, to grow the economy and to improve the way we live and to meet our ambition to become a net zero nation by 2045.

Re-elect the SNP to:

### **Invest in our NHS**

We will increase frontline NHS spending by at least 20% over the next parliament to support and implement an NHS recovery plan to ensure urgent care is delivered swiftly and catch up on treatments that have had to be delayed.

We will create a new centre of excellence for rural and remote medicine and social care to provide expertise and advice on the delivery of care in different rural, island, and remote settings in Scotland and invest in our rural general hospitals.

We will roll out more mobile health services for direct delivery of care, particularly in rural areas. This will include additional screening services, stroke units and mental health services.

We will invest half of all NHS frontline spending in GP and community services as we work to increase access to diagnosis and treatment in the community, and reduce the need to travel to hospital.

### **Create a National Care Service**

The National Care Service will oversee the delivery of care, improve standards, ensure enhanced pay and conditions for workers and provide better support for unpaid carers.

It does not mean all care homes will be owned or run by the Scottish Government, but it does mean that we will improve standards, training and pay across the board, and that there will be increased accountability for the provision of social care.

### **Empower our rural communities**

We will also support more communities to benefit from Community Wealth Building where public services are required to spend in their local communities through increased local procurement, greater use of small businesses and ensuring taxpayers money is reinvested as far as possible in their local communities.

And we will renew the Community Empowerment Act, and introduce new Land Reform Legislation with a presumption in favour of community buy-outs.

### **Opportunities for all**

As part of our drive to ensure everyone gets a fair start, and drawing from the experience of online education during the pandemic, we will expand our digital learning offer to develop a National Digital Academy.

This will allow learners to access the full higher curriculum, regardless of school or location. This new approach would end the postcode lottery of subject choice - making all subjects available in all communities,

and enable people to study for their Highers later in life, in their own time, fitting it around work or caring commitment.

### **Champion our rural economy**

We will create opportunities for new businesses to grow and flourish in every part of Scotland. To breathe new life into the economies of rural Scotland we will create a new, £20 million Rural Entrepreneur Fund – this will provide grants of up to £10,000 to support the creation of 2,000 new businesses.

We will maintain investment of £6.2 million per year in the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to alleviate some of the pressure that tourism can have on local rural communities and invest a further £1 million in a Seasonal Ranger scheme to help support responsible tourism in our rural and remote areas.

We will develop plans to grow agri and food tourism, which can play a large part in the rural economy.

### **Support our fishing industry**

Our fishing and seafood sectors are currently suffering the very real price of Brexit. As a priority these sectors need access to the EU single market without the barriers the UK Government has put in place through Brexit and an SNP government will do all we can to regain markets and opportunities for our fish and seafood sector.

We will continue to support our fishing industry to recover from the Tories' Brexit betrayal and press for the £62 million of marine funding Scotland is entitled to, to be fully allocated to Scotland.

We will create an explicit economic link between catching and landing, incentivising the landing of more fish in Scotland creating more jobs and business opportunities onshore, especially in processing.

### **Transform farming and food production**

We will transform support for farming and food production to be more sustainable. By 2025, half of all funding for farmers and crofters will be tied to efficiency, productivity, biodiversity and sustainability.

We will develop a single marketing brand for all Scottish produce – Sustainably Scottish – available to all Scottish based producers, manufacturers and suppliers, big or small, that can satisfy stringent criteria on provenance and low carbon operations.

We will create a new £15 million fund to support food processing and manufacture to develop local supply chains and transition to low or zero carbon operations.

### **Revitalise our towns and communities**

We will build on the recent Scotland Loves Local campaign which encouraged people to think local first by piloting local loyalty schemes alongside a national Scotland Loves Local loyalty scheme. We will introduce a new £10 million Scotland Loves Local fund will help revitalise high streets hit by the pandemic.

To stop depopulation and support our communities, we will give local authorities the powers to manage the numbers of second homes in their area and will work with Community Land Scotland so we can find the right land to deliver more housing in our rural areas.

We will also work with local authorities to develop a Rural Visa Pilot as a rural and remote migration initiative.

### **Improve connectivity**

We will work with regional transport partnerships to reinstate or develop new railway branch lines across rural Scotland, delivering enormous benefits to communities and the regional economy in terms of sustainable tourism and meeting our green travel objective.

We will ensure that our road network in all parts of Scotland supports electric vehicles and invest £500m in bus infrastructure.

Recognising how reliant the economy in rural areas is on having good connectivity our £579 million investment in the expansion of superfast broadband means every home and business in South and Central Scotland will have access by 2023, with work in the North of Scotland completed in the next five years.

Through the Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme we will provide funding of up to £5,000 to help homes and businesses obtain superfast broadband in areas where providers may not ordinarily go, ensuring that everyone can access and benefit from this world-leading digital capability.

Over this parliament, we will invest £25 million to improve mobile coverage in remote rural and island communities.