



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

DRAFT

Meeting of the Parliament

Monday 2 February 2026

Session 6



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Scottish Parliament

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Motion of Condolence

14:05

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

Our next item of business is a debate on motion S6M-20640, in the name of John Swinney, on a motion of condolence.

Today, our flags fly at half mast as a mark of our respect for the Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness KC—Jim Wallace. We are honoured to welcome Jim's wife, Rosie, daughters Helen and Clare, brother Neil and other close family and friends to our gallery today.

The devolution referendum of 1997 was a major part of my political awakening, as I am sure it was for many in Scotland. It was an opportunity that spoke to a politics that sought to bring active democracy closer to the people. The question whether there should once more be a Scottish Parliament and what powers that Parliament might have was the debate of the time, and Jim Wallace's role in it cannot be overstated.

Jim Wallace was the most passionate of advocates for devolved government, and his persuasive and eloquent yet relatable contribution inspired confidence in the idea of this institution. He played a major part in securing the yes, yes vote that he worked so hard for, not just in TV and radio studios, but behind the scenes, where he worked collaboratively using the skills, experience and expertise that he carried so lightly and put to such great effect for the people of Scotland.

This is my 27th year in the Scottish Parliament, and I know that, without Jim Wallace, Parliament would be a different place—a lesser one. Jim lived our parliamentary values of wisdom, integrity, justice and compassion, which were constantly demonstrated through his incredible career. His steadying hand in some challenging early days was just what was needed. Jim Wallace is a pillar of this Parliament.

I feel truly privileged to have had an opportunity, particularly in recent years, at formal and less formal events to get to know Jim better. From the kirking of this session of Parliament to his visits as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, I have learned so much from him. Most recently, we had great chats about family, fun and health.

Jim Wallace knew what mattered most to people. With the people of Scotland, the Parliament mourns his passing, gives heartfelt

thanks for his contribution and shares our deepest condolences with his family.

14:07

The First Minister (John Swinney): Jim Wallace may not have designed the Scottish Parliament building in which we meet today, but we can say with absolute certainty that Jim Wallace was an architect of the Scottish Parliament.

Jim was a lifelong adherent of the Liberal tradition in Scotland. Although he led the Scottish Liberal Democrats, he first joined the Scottish Liberal Party, which emerged from a radical tradition of politics in our country, with a commitment in its foundations to home rule for Scotland. Consistent political support for the concept of Scottish self-government, pressure to establish a Scottish Parliament and the hard work to turn it into practice through the work of the consultative steering group were all part of the contribution that was made by Jim Wallace.

Jim was first elected to the United Kingdom Parliament in 1983, as MP for Orkney and Shetland. He followed in the footsteps of another great Liberal, Jo Grimond, and had to compete for his seat with the formidable champion of my party, Winnie Ewing. He held that seat for nearly two decades, and was always a tireless champion for island communities.

I got to know Jim well when I joined him in the House of Commons in 1997. I watched, with respect and admiration, a formidable parliamentarian—from whom I learned a great deal about how to be a parliamentarian—lead the arguments for the Liberal Democrats during the debates on the referendum legislation in 1997, and then the passage of what became the Scotland Act 1998, which paved the way for the establishment of the Scottish Parliament.

It was little surprise that, in 1999, Jim opted to stand for Holyrood, for Orkney, the island archipelago where he lived and which he loved. Jim ushered the Liberal Democrats into government in 1999—the first time that Liberals had been in government in the United Kingdom since 1922—and assumed the role of Scotland's first Deputy First Minister, a role in which he served from 1999 to 2005. He served also as Minister for Justice and later as Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning.

In that role, in 2004, Jim attended the United Nations to hear its secretary general, Kofi Annan, deliver the inaugural Robert Burns memorial lecture, on the theme of the state of the world and the brotherhood of man, calling for tolerance and coexistence among all peoples. I cannot be alone in thinking that those were themes that Jim

Wallace championed throughout his political career and of which we could do with a great deal more in the world today.

As Deputy First Minister, Jim became acting First Minister three times, stepping in first when Donald Dewar became ill, and a second time upon his untimely death. Jim stepped in again following Henry McLeish's resignation. In doing so, he provided stability and a steady hand in times of unexpected upheaval. More than that, in this Parliament's early years, when it was yet to prove itself in the eyes of many Scots, Jim sought to ensure that it delivered what the people had voted for in 1997—a Parliament that worked together, across parties, to get things done and to improve life for all Scots.

In 2007, he became Baron Wallace of Tankerness and a member of the Calman commission on devolution, which recommended extending the powers of this Parliament. When the Liberal Democrats became part of the United Kingdom Government in 2010, Jim found himself back on the front line, serving for five years as Advocate General for Scotland. It was in that role that he brought forward the idea of using a section 30 order to give the Scottish Parliament the power to hold an independence referendum—a visionary move, in my eyes.

In all those roles, Jim offered an exemplary example of public service, but he still had more to give. In 2021, he was delighted, but also pretty daunted, to become the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland—one of only two elders since the reformation to hold that post. That was during Covid, and Jim—supported, as always, by Rosie—found a way of reaching people in those difficult days, supporting them and reassuring them that more hopeful days lay ahead. That was a year of great fulfilment for Jim, when he could share with others his deep Christian faith and how his faith had made him who he was, in a way that is often more difficult to do in politics. As moderator, he reached across the aisle, helping to bring the Church of Scotland into greater collaboration with the Episcopal and Catholic churches.

Throughout his life, Jim practised politics the way that politics ought to be practised—with passionate but respectful debate, with genuine collaboration and, above all, with the utmost compassion and devotion to those he served. That was the type of person he was—selfless and principled, a man of integrity, a man of decency.

Jim and I were clearly from different political traditions. We believed in different things and in different destinations for our country, but none of those differences stopped us respecting each other's contribution to our country's politics—never

doubting each other's motives and always maintaining personal courtesy towards each other. At joyful moments in my life and at incredibly tough moments in my life, I would receive kindness from Jim Wallace, as did so many others.

When I became Deputy First Minister in 2014, Jim wrote to wish me well, as he put it, from one Deputy First Minister to another. He encouraged me to enjoy the role, especially the fun that was to be had when I stood in for the First Minister at First Minister's question time with, as he put it to me, all of the opportunity and none of the responsibility.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, I had the great privilege to welcome Jim and Rosie to Bute house in your presence, Presiding Officer. I felt that it was important that we marked a milestone in the life of our Parliament. One of its key founders should be welcomed to Bute house to acknowledge the significance of the occasion. It was so appropriate that both Jim and Rosie were there, so that I could acknowledge, on behalf of the whole country, the outstanding service that they have given to Scotland.

The last time that I questioned Jim in his capacity as acting First Minister, on 22 November 2001, it was at the end of a period of Labour political chaos. Generously, I said:

“Mr Wallace will not be here to answer questions next week, but I am sure that he will have to come back to rescue the Labour Administration when it implodes. Does he agree that it is not appropriate today for us to say goodbye, but that we should say merely, ‘Au revoir?’”

There is genuine and heartfelt sadness on my part today that we are here to say goodbye and not “au revoir” to Jim Wallace. He has been taken from us all far too soon. I have to give the last word of our exchange in 2001 to Jim. In reply to my impertinent question, the acting First Minister of the day said:

“On Mr Swinney's final point, I say only this: when the history books are written it will be found that I might not have discharged the duties of First Minister for as long as other people did, but I probably did it more often.”—[*Official Report*, 22 November 2001; c 4119, 4120.]

It was a typical Jim Wallace quip, but he was right about his place in the history of Scotland's story.

I end by expressing my own personal deepest sympathies and those of the Scottish Government and the people of Scotland to Jim's wife Rosie, his mother Grace, his daughters Helen and Clare, his brother Neil and his grandchildren. They have all lost a dear loved one, and Scotland has lost one of her finest sons.

I move,

That the Parliament expresses its sadness at the sudden death of Lord Jim Wallace; appreciates his many years of outstanding public service and the high regard in which he

was held as a Queen's Counsel, MP for Shetland and Orkney and the first ever MSP for Orkney, his seven years as the first Deputy First Minister of Scotland, and latterly as member of the House of Lords; acknowledges his long service to the Church of Scotland as an elder at St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall and as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland from 2021 to 2022, and expresses deepest condolences to his wife, family and many friends.

14:17

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): Presiding Officer, I start by thanking you and the First Minister for such heartfelt words. Jim's family and my party have been overwhelmed by the kindness that has been shown to us in these difficult days. We are heart-sore at his loss, but the outpouring of love and respect that has come forth from all sides of the chamber has been such a balm at this difficult time.

A verse from the book of Micah reads:

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

That verse was read to Church of Scotland congregations across the country on Sunday. It is just a part of the normal rhythms of the kirk at this time of year, yet those words speak to the qualities and life choices of Jim Wallace perhaps more than any other passage in scripture. Jim was a man of profound Christian faith. The values in those words speak to so much about his politics and his dedication to public service.

It was in Elphinstone hall at the University of Aberdeen, during the referendum campaign of 1997 to establish this Parliament, that I first heard Jim Wallace speak. I was just a student at the time, but that night he inspired me to recognise that I was a Liberal, that I absolutely agreed that there should be a Scottish Parliament and that I wanted to have the opportunity to serve in it one day.

This weekend, the rightly offered torrent of praise for Jim focused on his many achievements in the high offices that he held, but it is often forgotten just how much of this place we owe to him. He was central to the Constitutional Convention that made the case for devolution and, with the referendum won, he became an architect of our reconvened Parliament and of modern Scotland. He was a details man. He took great pride in—for want of a better word—the geekery of the Parliament's formation and in helping to draft the conventions and standing orders that we still observe today. He loved this chamber. He was so proud of his involvement in its establishment and what it would go on to achieve. So much of that was made possible by his ability to work across party lines and, in particular, by his friendship with the late Donald Dewar.

Jim is celebrated for his ability to lay aside political tribalism and to reach for the better nature of his adversaries. There is such rancour in our politics today, so we could all learn something about his approach and lean into his legacy of doing politics through grace and reconciliation.

Although Jim was a man of towering intellect, he was largely bereft of technical know-how or any sort of co-ordination. Indeed, Rosie, his wife, described him as being completely haunless. One afternoon, she discovered him astride the ride-on lawnmower, having gone up and down their garden for hours, not realising that the filter was blocked and he had not clipped a single blade of grass.

We kicked off the first day of our election campaign in 2003 with a balloon launch. However, at the moment of the balloons' release, the cameras of the nation's media were not trained on the cascade of golden balloons ascending into the stratosphere; they were focused on the Deputy First Minister of Scotland, who had become hopelessly entangled in the fishing net that we had used to collect them. Indeed, our press officer Neil Mackinnon literally had to rip a button from his suit jacket to set him free.

However, we did not need Jim for his co-ordination or for his technical know-how; we needed him for his grasp of political strategy, for his stoicism and for his ability to discern the true north of our Liberal values. Nicol, Tavish, Willie and I, as his successors in leadership, have all turned to Jim for counsel and support. That is why I had no hesitation in appointing him as chair of our Scottish general election campaign in 2024. I am heartily glad that he lived to see the revival of our party, which he played such a role in, and the best election result for Liberals in his lifetime.

Although Jim was a mainstay of support to us, he could not have achieved anything without the bedrock of support that he received from his family, particular from his wife, Rosie. I love the story of how they met. It was the summer of 1979, and Jim had almost forgotten about the Shakespeare-themed fancy-dress party that he had been invited to in the neighbouring flat. It was after midnight when he finally remembered, so he shoved a couple of lilac bush branches down the back of his jumper and knocked on the door. Rosie, in full costume—this is the first time they met—answered the door, exclaiming, "I'm Titania, Queen of the Fairies. Who on earth are you?" He replied, "I'm Birnam Wood, come to Dunsinane."

Rosie, Helen, Clare and Neil, thank you for helping Jim to become the giant that he was and for sharing him with us. We have so much love for you, and we will continue to hold you in the light that shines.

Jim Wallace acted justly, he loved mercy and he walked humbly with God. We are all the poorer now that he is gone, but this Parliament and this country are immeasurably richer because he lived.

14:23

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

It was with enormous shock and sadness that we learned last week of the death of Jim Wallace, whom I had the privilege of knowing both as a political opponent and as a friend over many years.

The last time I saw Jim was back in September, at the Holyrood garden party at the botanic gardens, where we had a good chat and catch-up, typically over a drink. I knew that he had been through some major surgery, and I commended him on how well he was looking, but there were clearly underlying health issues that, very sadly, caught up with him at the much too young age of 71.

Over the past few days, a great deal has been written about Jim's distinguished career as a lawyer, as a politician and in the church. Until the formation of the celebrated Conservative and Liberal Democrat UK coalition Government in 2010, he was the most senior Liberal to hold political office in Britain for decades, and he performed his duties as Deputy First Minister of Scotland with distinction. In the first session of this Parliament, he was a rock of stability through a period in which there were three Labour First Ministers—Jim was always there, on three occasions having to take on the role of acting First Minister.

Despite his genial manner, Jim was tougher than he looked, as anyone involved in discussions with him would quickly find out. However, he was straightforward and decent in his dealings, and it could truly be said that there was no side to him.

Jim was excellent company. I remember on many occasions sharing a pint and chewing over matters of mutual interest, not least talking football. There we had something in common, because along with Alasdair Morrison, Andy Kerr, myself and a few others, Jim was a member of that informal group known as the Holyrood true blues Rangers supporters club. One of Jim's proudest moments came in May 2000, when, as Deputy First Minister, he attended the Scottish cup final and was asked to present the cup to the winning captain. That match was between Aberdeen and his beloved Rangers, and he could hardly contain his delight at handing it over to the Rangers captain, Arthur Numan, following a 4-0 victory.

Jim was also a man of faith. He was a loyal elder at St Magnus cathedral in Kirkwall for many years, and it was entirely fitting when he was appointed Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church

of Scotland, where he took his duties as seriously as he had done when he was Deputy First Minister. More recently, he and Rosie sang in the choir at Dunblane cathedral, maintaining his lifelong link with the kirk.

When people die, there is always an urge to say how nice they were, even if that is not always entirely true. In Jim Wallace's case, everyone can say that quite truthfully. He was, in all he did and in all his dealings with people, a genuinely nice man. In the words of the former First Minister, Jack McConnell, he was "the best of men". On behalf of the Scottish Conservatives, I offer my sincerest condolences to Rosie, to Helen, to Clare, to Neil and to the wider family.

14:26

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): I start by saying how phenomenal the speeches have been. It is a genuine privilege to speak about the great man that was Jim Wallace. We are all deeply saddened by his passing.

First and foremost, our thoughts are with his amazing wife, Rosie, his two daughters, Helen and Clare, and his brother, Neil. I know that they will feel his passing most deeply. I know how huge a part of their life he was, but they should be so proud of the man he was, what he dedicated his life to and what he achieved.

I also offer condolences to our friends in the Liberal Democrats. I know that they will feel his loss sharply, but he was honestly loved and respected right across the political spectrum, as they will have heard today.

When putting together my comments today, I was thinking about the words I would use to describe Jim Wallace—kindness, decency, wisdom, principle and dedication.

Kindness, because every single time you met him, he met you with warmth and enthusiastic encouragement, regardless of what politics you had.

Decency, because he believed in bringing people together. He did his politics through gentle persuasion, rather than through some of the more cut-and-thrust methods of modern political times.

Wisdom, because he could see ahead, and I know how significant a role he played in persuading Labour politicians about devolution and this Parliament, or indeed Scottish National Party politicians about devolution and this Parliament.

Principle, because he was such a proud believer in devolution and the Scottish Parliament, and he shares in all the successes that this Parliament has had. I know that there have been Labour First

Ministers but they could not have done their job if they did not have a man of the stature of Jim Wallace alongside them.

Dedication, because he was dedicated to his family, to liberty, to public service, to faith, to Scotland and, of course, to Rangers, which was a deep passion of his.

In all the roles that he had, he was a unifier, whether as a member of Parliament, a member of the Scottish Parliament, Deputy First Minister, Advocate General or Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He believed in bringing together people of all faiths and all political persuasions to make progress as a country.

I end with some words that Jim Wallace said when he was moderator:

“Today we must be ready to go out from our buildings, and get alongside people ... ‘in our towns and cities, in homes, around tables, in the fields at work’—

all in the good cause, to spread hope and humanity.

Jim Wallace leaves our politics poorer. He leaves our social circles poorer. He leaves Scotland poorer without him. He also leaves us with an example to follow—a life dedicated to public service, to ideals and to the great people of Scotland.

To Rosie and all his family, we send our deepest condolences. We were all so lucky to know him and to have him.

14:30

Gillian Mackay (Central Scotland) (Green): Jim Wallace was one of the founders of devolution. Without him, our Parliament would be a weaker and less ambitious place.

I did not know Jim Wallace on a personal level as well as many others did but, the few times that I met him, he was warm, funny and quick to offer genuine advice to a very new MSP who had a lot to learn. I regret that I have not had the pleasure of working with him or serving in this Parliament with him.

In preparing my remarks, I spoke to colleagues who had worked with Jim. Their view, as has been the case so far across the chamber, was unanimous. They describe an unwaveringly decent and kind person who took Parliament seriously and took Scotland seriously. When he worked, it was with integrity. When he disagreed with colleagues, it was always in a spirit of respect.

Jim was only the second person who was not a Kirk minister to take on the role of Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland since

the 16th century. Moderator is clearly a non-partisan, party-neutral role. Jim did what he had to do and resigned his membership of the Liberal Democrats for the year of his tenure—it was a commitment on his part that his public service was above party politics.

My co-leader Ross Greer was grateful to know a deeply thoughtful man with an unparalleled commitment to serving Scotland through both politics and the Kirk. His term coincided with Glasgow hosting the 26th United Nations climate change conference of the parties—the COP26 climate summit. That resulted in Ross’s personal highlight of the conference: forming a temporary double act with Jim for a guest lecture at Trinity College Glasgow about faith and small-g green politics. That experience illustrated Jim’s commitment to public service, his love for his country and how his deeply held personal faith influenced his political life.

In this Parliament, we should remember the committed and dedicated voices who came before us and the wonderful legacies that they leave. We should be inspired by Jim Wallace’s work and should try to conduct ourselves in the manner in which he conducted himself. A long-serving Liberal Democrat MSP, Deputy First Minister, acting First Minister and Moderator of the General Assembly, his commitment to public service can never be in doubt. His sudden loss will be keenly felt by colleagues in the Parliament, and I extend our condolences in particular to our colleagues in the Liberal Democrats.

Most of all, I send my condolences to Jim’s friends and family. I sincerely hope that they take comfort in the universal affection and respect that have been expressed by MSPs across all parties.

14:33

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): Even though it seemed that Jim Wallace had lived many lives in one, he was taken from us far too soon. I worked for Jim as the party’s chief executive during the first Scottish Parliament elections, and then with Jim when I became a parliamentary colleague and then leader.

There was so much that I learned from Jim. The first thing was his appetite for detail. When I was first appointed to the job, I visited him and the rest of the Scottish MPs at Westminster. I discovered them in a meeting room, immersed in the papers of the Scotland Bill as they drafted endless, copious amendments to it.

Fast forward a year to the consultative steering group. While other leaders delegated the task to other people in their parties, Jim stepped forward to craft the procedures and standing orders of this place.

I could not get it. I wanted to win votes, not to make rules, but Jim knew that the shape of this Parliament would leave an impression far more enduring than any short-lived campaign.

Although Jim had an affinity for the law and procedure, he understood the essential element of politics, which is good relationships. During the coalition agreements, we had a grand procedure called the dispute resolution procedure. People thought that it was a grand committee that would meet periodically, but it was just Jim and Donald Dewar, because they trusted each other implicitly. There were wars almost every week between the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups, but every single problem was solved by that group. That endured into a sound relationship with Jack McConnell, who spoke so movingly about Jim on the radio last week. They all trusted one another implicitly.

Finally, there was Jim's calm, respectful resilience. Jim endured many political crises through his 13 years as party leader, six years as Deputy First Minister, five years as a UK Government minister and 43 years as a parliamentarian in three different Parliaments. Most politicians would have copious amounts of baggage as a result of those experiences, but such was the mark of his success that he went on to occupy the position of moderator, which is probably the closest to God that you can get in the Church of Scotland.

Last year, following the memorial service reception for George Reid in this Parliament, with a fierce storm raging outside, I took the unusual step of skipping canvassing in Fife that day. Instead, I joined Nicol Stephen, Jeremy Purvis and Jim for a very long lunch. I am so glad that I did. We shared memories, we traded gossip, and we laughed and we laughed and we laughed.

14:37

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I thank colleagues for their generous comments this afternoon, and I thank those who have been in touch over recent days with wonderful messages. I have drawn huge strength from those messages, and I know that the family have drawn comfort from the outpouring of affection and admiration that Alex Cole-Hamilton referred to.

Jim Wallace was my boss, my mentor and my good friend. He bears responsibility for getting me hooked on politics and, like boiling a frog, slowly drawing me into standing for election. I forgave him that, although his lifelong love of Rangers was slightly more difficult to overlook. In return, Jim did not sack me when I tabled an early day motion in his name at Westminster congratulating Celtic's Lisbon lions on the 25th anniversary of their

historic European cup triumph—Jim was on holiday at the time. I was his researcher, special adviser and speechwriter, although I note that Jim never delivered a word that I wrote. Me delivering this speech feels deeply ironic in some senses. Even so, I can claim credit for Jim telling the now-infamous goat joke at the Orkney rugby club dinner in 1991—thankfully, it was not career ending for either of us.

Originally from Annan, Jim was a born-again islander, and he was fiercely proud of being Orcadian. For more than four decades, he represented the interests of islanders and our island communities with tenacity, diligence and selflessness, providing calm in times of crisis and always being approachable. The people who he served with such distinction in Orkney and Shetland are feeling his loss deeply right now. One person who I spoke to at the weekend even admitted that recent media reporting and tributes provided a timely reminder that Jim was so much more than just an excellent constituency MP and MSP, although that was always his number 1 priority.

Jim got things done in Government, in Opposition and outside of politics. He was fiercely intelligent, but he wore that intelligence lightly. I am far from alone, as we have heard in the debate, in having benefited from his wisdom—a wisdom that drew on his humanity, empathy and humility, which was no doubt a product of his deep faith.

With regard to this place, Jim was an architect of devolution, who helped very deliberately to create a Parliament that would require politicians to work across party divides, not by sacrificing their principles or adopting some cosy consensus but by putting in the hard graft and having the patience to find agreement that actually delivered for people, communities and our country.

Jim rarely took credit for his achievements, and he certainly did not do so on a personal level. He steered clear of personal attacks and abrasive politics in debate that grabs headlines and followers and, as a result, was often underestimated, including by himself. Jim's was a style of politics that elevated persistence over performance, sound policy over soundbites and bringing people together rather than driving them apart. That feels like a style of politics that is needed in this Parliament and in this country more than ever.

I first encountered Jim at a hustings in Kirkwall grammar school during the 1983 election. In the dining hall that afternoon, Jim's insight, passion and humour cut through a wall of teenage indifference—or they did in my case, and, happily, with a sizeable majority of voters in Orkney and Shetland thereafter. I cannot think of anyone who

has had a more profound influence since then on me or on my perspective about how we go about building a more liberal, tolerant and successful society. I have so many fond memories of time in Jim's company, plotting, planning or just gossiping, and always with laughter.

I am devastated by the sudden and untimely death of Jim Wallace. My heart goes out to Rosie, Helen and Clare, his mother Grace, brother Neil and the wider family who are having to deal with the loss of a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a grandpa and an uncle.

I am dealing with losing one of my closest friends, and folks in Orkney and Shetland, all the way down to Annan and beyond, are coming to terms with the loss of someone who the former First Minister Jack McConnell rightly described as the best of men. He really was the best of men.

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that motion S6M-20640, in the name of John Swinney, on a motion of condolence, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament expresses its sadness at the sudden death of Lord Jim Wallace; appreciates his many years of outstanding public service and the high regard in which he was held as a Queen's Counsel, MP for Shetland and Orkney and the first ever MSP for Orkney, his seven years as the first Deputy First Minister of Scotland, and latterly as member of the House of Lords; acknowledges his long service to the Church of Scotland as an elder at St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall and as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland from 2021 to 2022, and expresses deepest condolences to his wife, family and many friends.

[Applause.]

The Presiding Officer: We will now have a short pause before we move on with this afternoon's business.

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Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

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