

Scotland's Declaration of Independence

Published: January 14, 2026, 2:24 pm

This story will not resonate much in England, and so I share it here. As the [Herald](#) newspaper in Scotland has noted:

Prominent figures from the arts and academia have piled pressure on Nicola Sturgeon ahead of the SNP conference by publishing their own “declaration of independence”.

The 50 signatories - including actor Brian Cox, author Val McDermid and historian Sir Tom Devine - said staying in the Union meant Scots giving up their right to “decide their own destiny”.

The 12-point declaration set out the “guiding principles” for a new state, including a written constitution, and the expulsion of the Trident nuclear deterrent.

The declaration is as follows:

The Declaration of Independence Full Document

It is the sovereign right of the Scottish people to determine the form of government best suited to their needs (A Claim of Right for Scotland, 1989)

Guiding principles for a new and better Scotland

- It is the sovereign right of the Scottish people to determine the form of government best suited to their needs, now and in the future. In all political deliberations, decisions and actions their interests should be paramount.
- Scotland should be an open and democratic society in which no individual is excluded, oppressed or discriminated against on account of their race, colour, faith, origin or place of birth, physical or mental capacity, sex, sexuality, gender or language.
- Scotland should have a written constitution which clearly lays out the rights of its

citizens, the country's system of government and the relationships that exist between government, its instruments and powers and the rights of individual citizens.

- Scotland should take its place as an independent country on the world stage, free to join international organisations and alliances for purposes of trade and commerce, and for the protection and care of the planet's natural environment, without which the human race cannot survive.
- Scotland should uphold internationally acknowledged values of non-aggression and self-defence, and should refuse to maintain, stock or use, for itself or on behalf of any other power or government, chemical, biological or nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction.
- There should be clear separation of the powers of the Scottish parliament and government (the executive). The judiciary should be completely independent of government.
- Independence will provide an opportunity to review and, where necessary, change the systems of both national and local government, in order to make them more accountable to the people and more beneficial to their needs.
- Ownership of land, property and natural resources should be subject to open and democratic scrutiny. The ability of communities, both rural and urban, to own the land in and on which they exist should be enhanced and extended. There should be total transparency in the way property in Scotland is bought, sold or possessed.
- Freedom of speech and action, and the freedom to work, create, buy, sell and do business should adhere to principles of environmental and communal sustainability and responsibility. Profit and economic growth should not be pursued at the expense of the wellbeing of the people or their habitat or that of other people or nations.
- We affirm the values of care, kindness, neighbourliness and generosity of spirit in all our dealings. Such values are the foundation stones of a fair, free and open society where all citizens have the opportunities to lead the best, most fulfilling lives they can.
- It is our belief that the best option now open to the Scottish people is for Scotland to become an independent country.
- The alternative is to accept that Scotland's fate would remain in the hands of others and that the Scottish people would relinquish their right to decide their own destiny.

Signatories: Iain Anderson, broadcaster; Peter Arnott, playwright; Neal Ascherson, journalist and writer; Aly Bain, musician; Margaret Bennett, folklorist and singer; Robert Black QC, Professor Emeritus of Scots Law; Christine Borland, visual artist; Stuart Braithwaite, musician; Calum Colvin, visual artist; Roddy Buchanan, visual artist; Stuart Cosgrove, writer and broadcaster; Brian Cox, actor; Robert Crawford, writer; Sir Tom

Devine, Professor Emeritus of Scottish History; Lari Don, writer; Jenni Fagan, writer; Rt. Rev. Richard Holloway, writer and broadcaster; Robert Hodgins, musician; Kathleen Jamie, poet and writer; Jamie Jauncey, writer; A.L. Kennedy, writer; Liz Lochhead, poet, playwright, former Makar; Val McDermid, writer; Jamie MacDougall, singer and broadcaster; Lorraine Mackintosh, actor and singer; Dr. Dolina Maclennan, writer and broadcaster; Aonghas MacNeacail, poet and broadcaster; Dr. Ann Matheson, literary historian; Karen Matheson, singer; Alexander Moffat, artist; Jemma Neville, author; Andrew O'Hagan, writer; Aidan O'Rourke, musician and composer; Don Paterson, poet; Karine Polwart, musician and writer; Eddi Reader, singer; Prof. Alan Riach, poet and academic; James Robertson, writer; Donald Shaw, musician, composer and producer; Ross Sinclair, visual artist; Donald Smith, storyteller; Elaine C. Smith, actor; Alan Spence, writer; Will Storrar, minister and academic; Gerda Stevenson, writer and actor; Sheena Wellington, singer; Prof. Gary West, musician and broadcaster; Ruth Wishart, journalist and broadcaster.

CommonWeal added this note:

James Robertson, one of the originators of the Declaration: "We recognise that the direction of travel for the UK seems to be in the complete opposite direction from the kind of society that we want to create and live in."

I would agree with that. And it is precisely because there are those who still think it possible that a nation can be a force for good that this move is worth noting south of the border as well as north of it.