

Since the time of my last blog I have been extremely busy promoting our Love Equally campaign, as well as the promises I made to every single MSYP at our AGM in June.

It's been a brilliant two months, with the SYP name and image growing a great deal - I'm so proud of the amazing work we have all done - from the SYP staff team to all the MSYPs pushing our campaign across Scotland.

As you may know I attended the launch of our national campaign Love Equally, but for the weeks previous I was busy meeting with our staff regularly to try and ensure this was one of the best launches that the Scottish Youth Parliament has ever had. I think many of you will agree it was a great success and with the massive media coverage we received from STV, The Scotsman, ITV Wales, Pink News and many more it was our best publicised campaign ever. Lessons have been learnt and I will ensure that MSYPs receive information in advance of future campaign launches.

Obviously the work of the campaign did not stop there. While all of you were out working hard to gather hundreds of petition signatures, I was working on challenging the false perception of our campaign created by John Mason MSP's motion in the Scottish Parliament. I am delighted that the work done by myself and the staff has paid off - with MSPs from every single party backing Patrick Harvie's amendment to the motion and the personal messages of support we have been receiving for not only our national campaign but for the work we do as an organisation has been fantastic.

In my local area of East Kilbride I will be busy continuing to gather as many signatures as possible for our petition. Now can't be the time to rest on our laurels, we need to show decisions makers of the Scottish Parliament that it's time to not just consult on Equal Marriage, but to legislate on it. The only way that this is possible is to ensure that we get as many signatures as possible, so please keep promoting the campaign and [petition](#).

Away from the hectic work of campaigning myself, Rae Cahill, Malcolm Andrews and Kyle Thornton went down to Leeds for the UKYP Sitting. Well done to Kyle who successfully got a Scottish perspective into the UKYP manifesto with his motion on simplifying the UK tax system for young people everywhere. In Leeds I also met with the newly elected President of the NUS, Liam Burns, having extremely positive talks on new links between SYP and the National Union of Students.

This month I was also in London to meet with officials of the Votes@16 Coalition Group and representatives of the British Youth Council. Votes@16 is an important issue for us as an organization and I was proud to represent young people at that meeting and offer new and innovative ideas that have been effective for us in the SYP in the hope that one day votes at 16 will be a reality.

After the Votes at 16 meeting I met with staff from the British Youth Council and some of the young BYC members to see how BYC and the Scottish Youth Parliament can come much closer

together and fight for the right of young people in the halls and corridors of Holyrood, Westminster and the European Parliament.

Last week, I went to Belfast with Marie Gallagher to speak at a member's day of the Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF). I thought it would also be a good opportunity to discuss how SYP and the NIYF could work more closely together and how we could learn from each other's strengths.

I attended an evening reception at Edinburgh Castle with the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment, Alex Neil MSP and the Climate Change and Environment Minister Stewart Stevenson MSP as they launched Scotland's bid to host the World Water Forum's Conference in 2015. I chatted with both ministers on the SYP manifesto and was introduced to the Chief Executives of the World Water Forum and Scottish Water.

I was also invited to speak at the Young Scots for Independence's National Conference, which was a great opportunity to promote our Love Equally campaign.

I have been extremely busy meeting with MSPs in our new office to help build upon the great feeling and momentum which the organisation is developing right now. Linda Fabiani MSP, Derek Mackay MSP, Kezia Dugdale MSP, Patrick Harvie MSP, Marco Biagi MSP and Joan McAlpine MSP are just some of parliamentarians I have met with to discuss our work in the Scottish Youth Parliament and of course our campaign.

I'm really looking forward to the October Sitting - as promised, at the hustings session there will be a Board Q&A. If you have any questions please feel free to ask us on day, or if you have any feedback or questions in advance of the meeting please email me grant.costello.msyp@sypmail.org.uk

See you all in North Ayrshire on the 29th October!

Grant Costello

Chair

Scottish Youth Parliament