

January 2022 NEWSLETTER



Linlithgow & East Falkirk Constituency

Welcome

... and a Happy New Year! The reports, cover-ups, and lies about the Tories' rule-breaking lockdown parties have known no bounds since my last newsletter. The recently exposed shenanigans would have been enough to trigger any PM's immediate resignation but, truthfully, nobody is that surprised Boris Johnson hasn't resigned even though his position is untenable. After all, he's committed repeated resignation offences: unlawfully shutting down Parliament, misleading Parliament, Tory donors' peerages, public money for contracts for his mates, and sanctioning the use of Covid funding to conduct polling on the Union. There is no doubt that it's time to ditch this broken and corrupt Westminster system with independence. **YES**

Westminster Update

The Advance of the Democratic Deficit

Having lost all moral authority, we know Boris Johnson's days are numbered as the latest reports will struggle to fit under his already stuffed carpet. But his awaited resignation won't be enough to fix the UK's democratic deficit - he's just another result of the broken Westminster system. With one rule for his government and another for everyone else, even nearly half of all Tory Members no longer think he is the one to lead their party. Indeed, calls for his resignation rang out from the Scottish Tory leader Douglas Ross, and all Tory MSPs agreed. However, the ensuing comments made by his Westminster peers that Douglas Ross is "not a big figure" and "a lightweight" are telling. Aside from the obvious personal insults to the leader of Tory MSPs, they reveal the utter contempt the Westminster establishment feels towards Scotland. Westminster thinks Scotland doesn't need to be heard and can be treated like something on the sole of its shoe. The full powers of independence are needed to break free from Westminster's sleaze-ridden and outdated shackles, so Scotland can build a fairer nation with progressive policies that reflect our needs and aspirations. I have no doubt that whoever succeeds him will continue their toxic agenda, which Scotland never voted for.



Covid-19 and Compulsory Vaccinations

Before Christmas recess, Sajid Javid introduced the UKG's Plan B for England as a measure to cope with the Omicron variant - which looked remarkably like the arrangements already in place across Scotland and the other devolved nations. I took the opportunity to raise with him the concerning aspect of the lowering of immunity from vaccination, and the consequent importance of receiving a booster. Even now, it is important for people to be vaccinated and to get that booster. However, the rights of those not taking the vaccine cannot be brushed aside. This was brought to the fore in a debate I led last week, which resulted from a Petition - signed by over 200,000 people - calling for legislation to stop employers from making vaccinations compulsory for employees. "Covid-19: Requirements for Employees to be Vaccinated" discussed the implications for health and business and the arising serious ethical questions. The UK Government decision for health and social care services in England to ensure workers, who have direct face to face contact with service users, are fully vaccinated against Covid-19 is out of step with the other UK nations. Following the mandatory vaccination requirement for care home staff in England by the 11th of November last year, frontline health and social care workers in England will need to be fully

vaccinated by the 1st of April, which means they will need to have their first jab by the 3rd of February. Apart from patient consent being needed regardless of the procedure, I believe this creates an impending staffing crisis. In November, a Department of Health and Social Care impact assessment found that up to 73,000 NHS staff in England could lose their job as a result of this policy. The Scottish Government has not mandated the vaccination of Care Home or NHS staff in Scotland, pursuing an "educate and inform strategy" that has, thus far, resulted in higher vaccine uptake. In Scotland, there are no plans to change this entirely voluntary position for healthcare staff or anyone else. There is still time for the government to change tack on mandatory covid vaccination for England's NHS workforce. Vaccination should be a choice for the individual and comply with the principle of informed consent.

Active in the constituency

Energy Clinic & Doctor Bike Event

On the 4th of December I popped into this event, which was organised by Linlithgow Community Development Trust. It was a great opportunity for any household, business, group or organisation to get free and impartial energy advice; learn about Linlithgo-Solar enterprise; and find out invaluable information on funding available from Home Energy Scotland (HES). There was even the opportunity to get your bike fixed by 1st Step's expert bike mechanic. Here I'm with Morag Cockburn, HES' Senior Partnerships Officer, who has been working with my office's team to help constituents get quickly and easily referred to the range of services they provide. HES does great work, which I wholeheartedly endorse. You can find out more about their services by calling them free: 0808 808 2282 or visiting their website: <https://www.homeenergyscotland.org/contact-advice.../>



With the help of Dalriada Homecare's staff - who used to occupy the eatery's premises - curries were delivered along with care in the local community and surrounding areas. In this picture, taken by MB Media, I'm with Mohammad, his team and the Dalriada Homecare staff. My thanks go to all involved in this endeavour, and to Paul Kiddie for alerting me to Mohammad's kindness and generosity. "Well done!" to all who helped serve up this Christmas treat.

Friends of YES

On Friday I visited my neighbouring constituency to meet colleague John McNally MP & see the new Yes Hub that has been set up in Falkirk's Callendar Square Shopping Centre. We were joined by Scottish Greens' MSP Gillian MacKay, and founder member of folk rock band Rock Salt & Nails, Paul Johnston. As we look forward to 2022 and stepping up our campaigning, Hubs like these can help us to stay focused, engaged, active and confident that efforts we make are worthwhile. Use this facility and available materials, like the [recent Yes newspaper](#), to show the sceptical and curious that Scotland has what it takes to be an independent country.



Bo'ness Spice

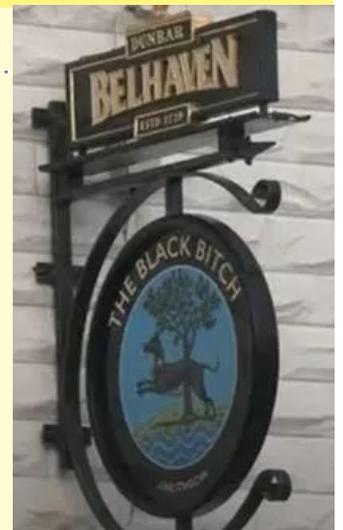
It was great to see community spirit alive and well over the festive period.

This restaurant's owner, Mohammad Abbas, decided he wanted to bring some festive cheer to those receiving care at Christmas.

Links between Parliament and the constituency

The Black Bitch Campaign

In case of doubt, this is about the brewing conglomerate Greene King's plans to change the name of Linlithgow's oldest public house in, what I view as, a misguided attempt at virtue signalling. It might seem an obscure name to be on the side of a pub in this day and age, but it is part of Linlithgow's living history. I tabled an Early Day Motion in Parliament about this because the Black Bitch - a female greyhound - has been depicted on Linlithgow's ancient burgh seal as far back as 1296 and in the Royal Seal that marked the town's status as a Royal Burgh. Indeed, Black Bitch imagery and artwork is featured throughout the town, including on schools' badges, local magazines, buildings, and a recent statue that stands in the High Street alongside a plaque explaining its history. I asked the House of Commons to support the rich traditions, local customs and heritage found not just in my constituency, but throughout these islands and beyond. The dog's loyalty, determination and grit is respected in Linlithgow by naming Linlithgow people Black Bitches as a mark of honour. Sadly, there has been acrimony between those who oppose and those who support the name change. I'm sure we can all agree that there is no place for this kind of intolerance in the ongoing debate. My view aligns with those concerned about the eradication of history and tradition, and that of the eminent anti-race hate campaigner Sir Geoff Palmer. Sir Geoff even mentioned the issue in a recent lecture: <https://youtu.be/oZ93w-g6Zgw> I will continue to urge Greene King to fully engage with community groups and those directly affected. Amid talk of the pub being boycotted if the name change happens, I urge everyone to consider the consequences this would have on both the establishment's future and those employed there.



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