



Linlithgow & East Falkirk Constituency

## Welcome

...to my fourth Newsletter of 2020 appearing the week after Parliament has risen for summer recess. What a year so far! The £1.3m invested in "hybrid proceedings" that ensured parliamentary representation could continue by means of technology, while social distancing was adhered to, didn't last. The Tories scrapped the effective digital voting system that was voted in for their ineffective antiquated conga line. Proof - if it was ever needed - that this government is discriminatory, not up for scrutiny and most definitely undemocratic. Read on for more evidence...

## Westminster Update

### UK Internal Market: White Paper

On the 16th of July the Business Secretary, Alok Sharma, published a White Paper on the UK Government's plans to protect the UK internal market after Brexit. Citing the "precious union" he claimed that in five short months the devolved nations would "hold an unprecedented level of powers". Be under no illusions - this is the Tories' latest con.

From presenting already devolved powers as "new", to creating a mechanism to override the Scottish Parliament and impose its own policies, it demonstrates that the Tory government is prepared to trample over Scotland's devolution settlement to satisfy Donald Trump's demands for a trade deal.

In his response to my point that this would be an abomination on democracy after his announcement, the Secretary of State had the nerve to talk of having a "unified coherent UK internal market"; ignoring the reality of his proposals that will undermine our standards. For example, "goods and services from one part of the UK will be recognised across the country to ensure the devolved administrations can set their own rules and standards in areas of their competence, but must still welcome the trade of businesses based anywhere in the UK." This translates as the lowest standards in any part of the UK prevailing over whatever is decided elsewhere. In other words, it is a race to the bottom!

It will increase the risk of chlorinated chicken, hormone-injected beef and GM foods being imposed on Scotland against our will, and threaten our world-class food and drink standards.

However the Tories try to dress it up and sell it, this is a cynical ploy to undermine our devolution settlement and risk our economy, but it does make it clearer than ever that the only way to properly protect Scotland's interests is to become an independent country.

### Coronavirus Update

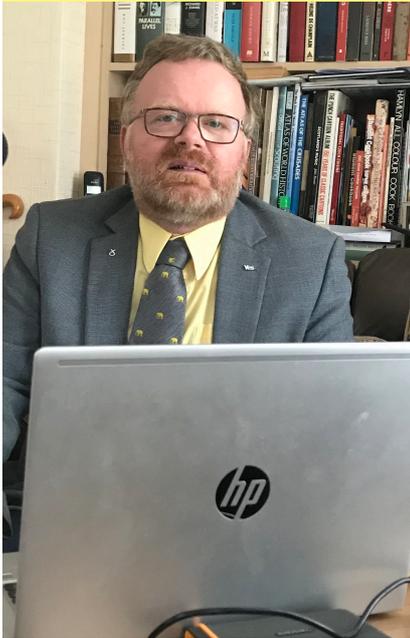
On the 14th of July the Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, made a statement in the Commons about Coronavirus. He set out the UK Government's strategy "is to protect the NHS, get the virus down and keep the virus down, while restoring as much of normal life as possible." I welcomed his announcement about the mandatory use of face coverings in shops in England, falling in line with Scotland and 120 other countries, but took the opportunity to challenge him on moving from a suppression strategy to one of elimination.

An Academy for Medical Sciences report commissioned by Sir Patrick Vallance, the UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser, concluded that July and August must be "a period of intense preparation" for a potential winter resurgence of Coronavirus with the R number conceivably rising to 1.7 by September; "Preparing for a challenging winter 2020/21" can be read here: <https://acmedsci.ac.uk/file-download/51353957>

Given we are half-way through this time of preparation the danger of not following Scotland's lead on an elimination strategy means risking a "second wave" during winter months and thousands more avoidable deaths, economic harm and impact on devolved nations. Matt Hancock's response that "elimination is extremely difficult" reflects the UK Government's lack of ambition. Thankfully Scotland has higher aspirations.



## Active in the constituency



### New ways of working

Like the rest of the country, I have been finding new ways of working remotely over the last four months. Restarting interactions with my constituents began at the beginning of June when I was able to offer virtual Advice Surgeries every Friday between 10 and 11am. These have proved popular so if you need to talk to me about anything just get in touch by phone or email - using the same contact details that are provided below - to book an appointment.

Zoom and Teams calls were a little known entity to me before lockdown, but both private and public communication by these methods are now the new norm. Apart from enabling (albeit limited) participation in the House of Commons proceedings, I've joined Unite the Union's MP's conference call "New Deal for UK aviation" and took part in the first ever virtual lobby for climate, nature and people, to name just two.

Lockdown has also been challenging for religious communities. The usual gathering for worship has adapted to keep people safe from Coronavirus. Be aware that Sanctuary First is available as a creative way of learning, celebrating, and finding solace through faith. I recently joined their Weekly Review: <https://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/video/watch/weekly-review-17.07.20> And, whilst the formal campaign for independence has been paused, you are likely aware that it has not prevented the growing movement in public opinion for independence. I've taken part in this conversation. You can catch up here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWNDORX6JWg>

### Gradual Easing of Lockdown Restrictions

Yesterday the First Minister announced the Scottish Government's most recent review of the remaining Covid restrictions. The cautious approach has not changed because, although we currently have low levels of Coronavirus, we must not underestimate how easily our progress can be undone - as has been shown in other places. Therefore, we remain in Phase 3 of the four-phase Route map.

However, two major changes are to happen before the next review in 3 weeks time: shielding for those extremely vulnerable to the virus will be paused from tomorrow; and schools are expected to reopen full-time on the 11th of August.

This will give the Scottish Government time to more fully assess any impact of the significant changes that have taken place over the last 3 weeks, such as the reopening of tourism and indoor hospitality. Minimal changes over the next few weeks will allow the impact of schools reopening and steps towards a more normal life for those who have been shielding to also be assessed.

Please be mindful that the virus is still around and of the continuing need for physical distancing, face-coverings and hand hygiene. This particularly applies to those who have been shielding. Remember they are still at higher risk and their needs should be respected.

## Links between Parliament and the constituency

### Falkirk's Forgotten Villages Group

Back in March I reported on what I had been doing to support this group's great work and I promised to keep you posted on any progress.

I was therefore delighted to learn last month that the group and Falkirk Council had reached an agreement to replace 667 out of the 776 properties affected by the ThermoFlow Heating System with mains gas. This means that affected properties in Avonbridge, California, Slamannan and Whitecross will be offered gas installation.

However, gas cannot be supplied across all affected localities. As a result, further and more detailed assessment is currently taking place to inform the most appropriate way forward - including renewable technologies - for Blackness, Letham, Limerigg, Standburn, South Alloa and Torwood.

Congratulations to all involved as this is a great result and showcases successful partnership working. It's a shame that the UKG doesn't work as a real partner.

I'm still waiting on a date to be re-scheduled for my Backbench Business debate "Fuel Poverty and Energy Price Caps" as it was one of many important matters that had to be put on hold due to the Coronavirus pandemic. It's an anomaly that Energy Policy is reserved to Westminster while Fuel Poverty is devolved. Yet another example of one hand being tied behind our back.



FALKIRK'S FORGOTTEN VILLAGES  
ENDING FUEL POVERTY



Martyn Day  
6 Preston Crescent  
Linlithgow  
EH49 6HW



[martyn.day.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:martyn.day.mp@parliament.uk)



[facebook.com/MartynDaySNP](https://facebook.com/MartynDaySNP)



[@martyndaysnp](https://twitter.com/martyndaysnp)



[instagram.com/martyn.day.snp](https://instagram.com/martyn.day.snp)



[linkedin.com/in/martyn-day](https://linkedin.com/in/martyn-day)



01506 654415

SNP