



Linlithgow & East Falkirk Constituency

Welcome

I'm greatly saddened that Russia's war on Ukraine continues. Primarily, of course, because of the atrocities being committed against the Ukrainian people but also - shamefully - because Tories are using it as an excuse to keep Boris Johnson as PM; a nod to the danger of one man and his cronies. On this week's Sunday Morning, Christina Lamb, the Sunday Times' Chief Foreign Correspondent commented on how popular Johnson is in Ukraine, with many saying "... we love Boris" but she swiftly added that many of us, who can see through the damage he is inflicting on our own democracy, are saying "... you can have him!"

Westminster Update

"Partygate" ... what's next?

The PM, his wife, and his Chancellor received fines (aka breaking the law) for behaviour at Number 10 whilst the majority of us were locked down, unable to even spend precious time with dying loved ones; and the damning Sue Gray report (amid increasing claims of dilution) is finally published. So, what now? Well, Johnson is unashamedly clinging on, most recently waiting until Parliament rose for Whitsun before modifying the Ministerial Code - rewriting its foreword and removing all references to honesty, integrity, transparency and accountability, and blocking a bid to give ethics advisors the power to investigate him. A handful of Scottish Tories have called for him to go, and Douglas Ross still defends Johnson remaining in office and has clammed up over the concerning Ministerial Code reports. However, a former Scottish Tory frontbencher, Professor Adam Tomkins, said "This is disgraceful. Corrupt and disgraceful. A betrayal of everything Conservatives are supposed to believe about our constitutional democracy." His latest move undoubtedly proves that Johnson is remorseless over Partygate, has no respect for people across the country, and no problem rewriting rules that are central to a functioning democracy - so long as his skin is saved. Remember the Owen Paterson debacle? He was found to have egregiously breached parliamentary lobbying standards and, to save him, Johnson tried to get the MP disciplinary process reviewed, thus exposing his contempt for standards. It is a repeated pattern of behaviour that his Classics Master identified in 1982 as a predisposition not to be subject to the "network of obligation that binds everyone." Johnson now faces a Privileges Committee inquiry but it is ever clearer that the only way to be free of undemocratic Westminster control is by gaining independence.



Malnutrition and the NHS

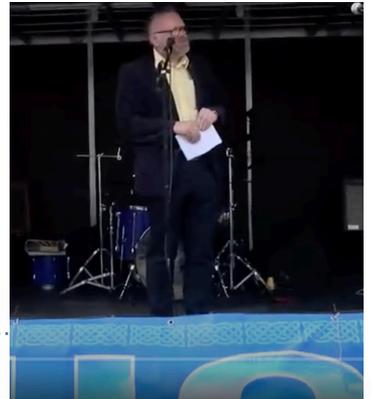
On the 25th of April I secured an adjournment debate "Malnutrition and the NHS". It is scandalous that malnutrition is alive and kicking in the fifth-richest country in the world. The condition has tripled in the UK since 2010 and it's not coincidental that the Tories came to power in the same year. In its various forms it affects more than 1 in 20 people in the UK, rising to 1 in 10 people aged over 65, and is more prevalent in those with existing illnesses. Outside of these groups, it is disproportionately concentrated in lower-income regions and households; with

undernutrition being more common in children from poorer backgrounds. Clearly political choices have led to food insecurity and the exponential rise in food poverty. The World Health Organisation agrees: "Poverty amplifies the risk of, and risks from, malnutrition. People who are poor are more likely to be affected by different forms of malnutrition. Also, malnutrition increases health care costs, reduces productivity, and slows economic growth, which can perpetuate a cycle of poverty and ill-health." In 2016, the United Nations proclaimed 2016 to 2025 as its decade of action on nutrition and called for policy action across six key areas. Yet the latest survey of malnutrition and nutritional care in adults found the prevalence of disease-related malnutrition was higher than in surveys carried out prior to 2016. The UKG rejected a proposal from some ex-Ministers to address malnutrition prevalence and one of the action areas the UN called for. Given the cost of malnutrition to the NHS is estimated to be a staggering £23.5 billion – equating to 15% of the total UK healthcare budget – any canny person would protect these precious resources at all costs. However, the UKG is not canny. In fact, its inertia in this regard reflects its inaction to the Tory cost-of-living crisis and flies in the face of its "levelling up" agenda. The only way to secure progressive politics for people in Scotland is with the full powers of independence.

Active in the constituency

Results of Scotland's local elections

Scotland again spoke loud and clear at the ballot box earlier this month. I'm delighted that the SNP vote was increased across both Falkirk and West Lothian Councils, while the Tories and Scottish Labour saw their share of the vote fall. Great news! However, in West Lothian, and beyond, Labour councillors have rewarded the Tories with power, as grubby backroom deals are done so they too can cling on to power, including giving Tories high-profile roles in councils. This is despite Anas Sarwar's election day appeal to voters not to reward "toxic, out of touch, and corrupt" Tories with their votes and the latest Partygate revelations. Sarwar even said Douglas Ross' defence of Boris Johnson was "disgusting". His promise of no deals, pacts, or coalitions rings hollow and expose how Scottish Labour care more about protecting Westminster control than protecting the people of Scotland from the Tory made cost-of-living crisis. In Westminster, Labour refused to back an SNP amendment calling for immediate financial support to help people through the Tory cost-of-living crisis, laying bare for all to see that Labour and the Tories are "two sides of the same coin". Only the SNP can be trusted to tackle the cost of living crisis and lock the Tories out of power in councils across Scotland. There are no planned electoral contests between now and the Independence Referendum so we must all redouble our efforts over the coming months to ensure an emphatic victory for "Yes".



Working together for independence

It is vital going forward that the Yes movement works together as one. On the 14th of May I spoke at the #AUOB March and Rally for independence: <https://youtu.be/cwnU6ognCko?t=2498> and it is clear that the Independence campaign is on the move. Save the date for a local Independence public meeting in **Grangemouth Town Hall on Thursday the 23rd of June** where President of the SNP, Michael Russell, is confirmed as guest speaker, doors open 6.30pm. Further cross-party speakers are yet to be announced. Spread the word and bring along any undecided friends and family. The Friends of Yes Hub in Falkirk has a new YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJCj...> and it was pleasure to help produce its first short film. Please visit and subscribe.

The SNP reached a ground-breaking co-operation agreement with the Scottish Green Party, which is reflective of working together and bringing a more constructive kind of politics to Scotland. This new independence discussion is important in raising Scotland's ambition and showing we are more ready than ever to transition to independence and take our place among the family of independent nations.

Links between Parliament and the constituency



The effect of Tory Policies

Last time I reported on how the UKG's broken promise on the Acorn CCS Project had direct consequences for Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency. But this is just one of many policies that have negative impacts on my constituency. Alongside its indefensible protection of Johnson that people of all political persuasions have written to me about calling for the PM's resignation, which I highlighted in the "Referral of Prime Minister to Committee of Privileges" debate, and its inaction on Malnutrition mentioned above, there are a myriad of toxic Tory policies that have ramifications for us. For example, its Public Order Bill, described

as "a staggering escalation of the government's clampdown on dissent"; its Elections Bill that will restrict the involvement of civil society in elections and the right to vote through voter ID requirements; and its Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, which seeks to limit free speech and increase powers of stop and search. The UKG has an ongoing campaign to target fundamental democratic rights and it is no coincidence that its decision to remove prosecutorial powers from the Electoral Commission came soon after it announced it would be investigating the funding of the Prime Minister's flat renovations. It smacks of government by vendetta when the UKG seeks to silence or side-line all who legitimately challenge them. I point to these Bills because they all match a pattern of power consolidation and suppression of opposition by this Tory Westminster government and, although some of this legislation applies only to England and Wales, there will be implications for anyone in Scotland wanting to travel to England to protest at the UK Parliament or elsewhere in the country. The UKG is stamping down on peaceful protest, wresting control over election calling from Parliament, undermining the devolved governments, weakening the courts, and attempting to break the Electoral Commission. The UK is drifting dangerously towards fascism and becoming a surveillance state. We need a modern, democratic Scotland wherein the integrity of electoral democracy cannot be undermined by a Tory government that has a majority of seats, not voters, and a total lack of respect for democracy. The only way that Scotland can be protected is through independence. Bring it on!

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