

SEPTEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER



Linlithgow & East Falkirk Constituency

Welcome

...to my first newsletter of the new Parliamentary term. Parliament resumed on the 3rd of September only to be "prorogued" a week later in an undemocratic, outrageous and unacceptable move by Boris Johnson. Turns out it was also unlawful as determined by our own Court of Session and the unanimous verdict of eleven Supreme Court judges - a truly emphatic ruling. Scotland deserves better than this. It's time to make your voice heard at <http://yes.scot>. With best wishes.

Westminster Update

Boris so far...

In his short time in office (69 days thus far) unelected Boris Johnson has lost every vote and his majority, broke the law by shutting down Parliament for his own gain, misled the Queen, purged twenty-one of his own MPs, and suffered resignations by government ministers, the Scottish Tory Leader and his own brother. Despite being compelled to return to the scrutiny of Parliament by the highest court in the land he, and his front benchers, denied any wrongdoing. Instead he ramped up his divisive rhetoric, showed no humility, and was blatantly disrespectful towards the judiciary and the House in repeatedly calling the European Union (Withdrawal) (No. 2) Act 2019 - that prevents us crashing out of the EU with no deal on the 31st of October - the "surrender" Bill; the "humiliation" Bill; the "capitulation" Bill. In a single sentence he said "...we will obey the law and we will not extend." Yet in saying so he commits to breaking the law again. His playground and populist tactics are a million miles from being Prime Ministerial. Indeed, his arrogant display is dangerous; and only confirms he is not fit to hold the office of Prime Minister. Clearly, responsibility does not always come with power. Suffice it to say that the 25th of September was not my best "return to work" day. Scotland did not vote for Brexit, this chaos, or Boris Johnson. A Prime Minister that has given unlawful advice to the Queen to shut down the House of Commons and silence Parliament will not hesitate in doing the same to Holyrood. Now, more than ever, Scotland needs to be an independent country, with democracy and compassion at its heart. That future is within our grasp, but we need to make it happen. Your vote can ensure Scotland becomes the independent sovereign nation that it deserves to be.

Hernia Mesh in Men

Since Parliament resumed after summer recess there have only been six sitting days. In one of those, I was able to learn and speak about complications that arise from hernia mesh operations in a Westminster Hall debate. The ill-effects of these procedures can be life-changing. I was lucky not to suffer any long-lasting effects from the two hernia mesh operations I underwent, but a UK survey of these patients showed that 40% of respondents were left in severe pain; that pain affected the sleep patterns of 85.6%; and 27.6% were diagnosed with mental health conditions, like PTSD. Health is devolved in Scotland but the regulation of mesh devices is reserved, so I called on the UK Government to urgently review the effects and legislate accordingly. In Scotland an independent



review published in March 2018 recommended mesh implants were only used as a last resort, which Scotland's Chief Medical Officer accepted. Scottish Government officials are working with UK colleagues to consider an automated implant registry, which would allow unique device identifiers to be entered on a patient's electronic record. The SNP hopes Ministers will work with their devolved Administration counterparts and consider a UK-wide summit on that issue. The question is though, how will EU regulations to monitor the use of these devices be reflected in UK law after Brexit? We must maintain the highest possible standards.

Active in the constituency



Canvassing in the constituency

I took advantage of my enforced time away from Westminster - and the fair weather - getting out & about to make local visits and campaign alongside the SNP teams across the constituency. Here I'm in Bo'ness and Armadale with #ActiveSNP. The canvassing has been very promising, hearing positive messages about the SNP and independence. It is clear that British politics is broken and Scotland must have a choice about our future. The sooner we can choose independence the better. The only way to win independence is by

convincing a majority of our fellow Scots that it is the right future for our country. It won't be done by scheming, but by one-to-one conversations and talking respectfully with people about their aspirations and concerns.

With the growing support for independence we have never had a better opportunity to make the case for Scotland having the right to choose our own future.

Presently, all indications are for a general election on a dreich, dark night so I recommend that you consider applying for a postal ballot. Be election ready - whenever it comes!



Links between Parliament and the constituency

Primary School visits



I used my time at home during the unlawful proroguing and summer recess to visit some local

schools and support their great work. Below, with pupils of Deanburn PS, I am presenting a commemorative copy of an Early Day Motion that I tabled in Westminster; celebrating their continued hard work and dedication to the "Send My Friend to School" campaign. Above, at Bowhouse PS, I joined a "Be Internet Legends" assembly; a joint programme between @Google and @TheParentsZone, which gives children the skills to have positive and safe experiences online. The UK Government's Online Harms White Paper proposed a UK-wide online media strategy and "duty of care" for internet companies so it was good to see this in practice within my constituency.



BREXIT READINESS STATEMENT
MPs are responding to a statement on Brexit preparations and Operation Yellowhammer
BBC PARLIAMENT 25 SEP HOUSE OF COMMONS

Brexit Readiness: Operation Yellowhammer

When Parliament and Government scrutiny was reinstated I raised concerns about UK Brexit planning during the Statement on Yellowhammer. I highlighted the redacted section on fuel and its potential impact on Grangemouth given the Strategic importance of the Petroineos refinery. Although I asked for comfort for my local community, Mr Gove's response did little to allay the genuine concerns of my constituents and myself.

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