

September 2022 NEWSLETTER



Linlithgow & East Falkirk Constituency

Welcome

More of the same - and even worse than Johnson - was revealed when Liz Truss became the new UK Prime Minister, ironically visiting Scotland to be installed as the 9th Tory PM that we haven't voted for since 1955. She has no mandate to govern in Scotland. She has no respect for democracy and only contempt for devolution, as was evidenced by her crass call to ignore our democratically elected First Minister. The sham of any "partnership" between the UK and Scotland has been shamelessly exposed. Meanwhile, ordinary taxpayers will shore up energy companies' profits while big business and high earners get tax breaks. We are being forced to pay for Westminster failure. No wonder support for independence is rising. [#YouYesYet](#)

Westminster Update

Truss' first PMQs on 7th September ... more of the same ... & worse

The day after her appointment as our new PM - without an electoral mandate from the general public - I had the opportunity to ask Liz Truss what she would do to protect our strategically important and energy-intensive industries from rising energy costs, exemplifying the Bo'ness firm Ballantine Castings as a small and medium enterprise (SME) that is facing an unaffordable rise in its bills (from £13,000 to an eye-watering £120,000 monthly). As a heavy energy user, its burden is disproportionate and tailored support is clearly required. The Energy Bill Relief Scheme that was subsequently announced by the new Business Secretary, Jacob Rees-Mogg, on 21st September fell far short of what SMEs need to survive. It doesn't include an energy price cap and only lasts for 6 months, going against a prior statement that SMEs would receive the same support as domestic customers. But we shouldn't really be surprised about misleading statements from this shower. Rees-Mogg said in July he would not serve under another Prime Minister, and in 2013 also said the UK on her own would have had a free trade deal with the United States years ago!



There was a chance to right this when the new Chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng, delivered his "mini-budget" 2 days later, under the guise of a fiscal event. Instead, he revealed the government's priority to protect the profits of large corporations in not extending a windfall tax, removed the cap on bankers' bonuses, and benefited only those with incomes over at least £155,000. The Institute for Fiscal Studies' response to his announcement makes interesting reading: <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/mini-budget-response> Two things worth highlighting are reports that Kwarteng refused to let the Office for Budget Responsibility assess the economic fall-out of the expected planned tax cuts, and that hedge-fund managers made small fortunes betting on the consequent impact on the pound, which plunged to a record low against the dollar as markets reacted to the biggest tax cutting moves in 50 years. A budget by the rich for the rich, and little for everyone else. What levelling-up agenda? We need independence. [#YouYesYet](#)

Health and Social Care Update



The new Health Secretary, Thérèse Coffey, set out her "ABCD" of priorities on 22nd September. Yet another plan from the latest Tory Health Secretary - the fifth in as many years. I was able to invite her to justify the UKG's prioritisation of bankers and tax cuts for the rich at a time when investment in public services is at its most essential. She didn't. I also asked her to support the SNP call for an NHS uplift greater than inflation. She didn't. What she did was ignore nurses, without whom the NHS can't function, and stick with her rhetoric at the cost of confusing the alphabet; as was pointed out to her, social care does not begin with a "C". Her grasp of the English language came under more fire when it was reported that she dislikes the Oxford comma - often used to provide clarity in statements. Well, you can understand how a Tory wouldn't like that! Unfortunately, the offending linguistic device appears in the foreword to "Our Plan for Patients" - which she signed. What to do when facing the result of 12 years of the most severe NHS underfunding ever ... by her government. [#YouYesYet](#)

Active in the constituency

Campaigning for Independence

Reading the snapshot that I have given above about recent events and the further "shift to the right" under Westminster control, it is now even more vital that campaigning for independence continues at pace. Good news is that the latest survey in the series of British Social Attitudes (BSA) shows a significant rise in support for independence. It's the 39th annual BSA report, published by the National Centre for Social Research, that examines where the public - throughout the UK - stand on the challenges that policymakers and politicians currently face. It shows that support in Scotland for Scottish independence has increased in recent years, with 52% of people in Scotland favouring independence when they were asked to choose between independence, devolution and no Scottish Parliament - up from 23% in 2012. And it's not just down to SNP voters with 38% of Labour voters in Scotland backing independence - up from 18% in 2010. Brexit has undoubtedly bolstered the independence cause because Scotland voted to remain. So too did Northern Ireland and the BSA survey also shows that, for the first time, only 49% of people in Northern Ireland support remaining in the UK. The SNP's full written intervention in the Supreme Court's independence referendum reference has now been published and can be read in full here: <https://www.snp.org/the-snps-supreme-court-submission-on-the-independence-referendum/>

What Scotland was told:



Fact #54 - The UK pound is one of the oldest, strongest and most successful currencies in the world.
08/08/2014

What Scotland got instead:



Pound falls against every currency in the world
The Telegraph, 26th September 2022

YES

FIND OUT WHY WE NEED
SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE
yes.scot

Look at the graphics here to see just 2 examples of why we cannot trust what the Tories and the "No" Camp say. The Tories so-called "Brexit Freedoms" Bill is another Tory power-grab threatening to undermine devolution, workers' rights and food and environmental standards. Its aim is to repeal all EU regulations in the UK, including those protecting safe limits on working hours and parental leave, and standards on water quality and baby food. It will also allow the UKG to act in devolved policy areas without the consent of the SG, directly contradicting Devolution and the Sewel Convention. Keep on asking: [#YouYesYet](https://twitter.com/YouYesYet)

What Scotland was promised:



Lower energy bills for Scotland than if we leave the United Kingdom.
03/05/2014

What Scotland got instead:



Millions of households face unprecedented 80% increase in energy costs
BBC News, 26th August 2022

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Links between Parliament and the constituency

Peter McLagan MP

I recently met with my constituent and local historian, David William Main. David contacted me in August and drew my attention to one of my predecessors, Peter McLagan MP, who was the MP for Linlithgowshire between 1865 and 1893. On learning about Peter, what struck me was his progressive views, including advocating for more Scottish representation in Westminster! He was also an early champion for votes for women and the lowering of a property qualification, which barred most – men at that time – from voting or standing for election. Another issue Peter supported was primary and secondary education, believing that, regardless of distance or locale, all children should receive the same education and that a system of national secondary education be established. It would be a further 25 years following his service to the constituency before all men could vote in 1918; and long-suffering women had to wait a further 10 years. Here is a link to an article that David had published in the local magazine, Konect: <https://www.konect.scot/post/peter-mclagan-scotland-s-first-non-white-mp-and-suffragist-in-trousers>

I have tabled an Early Day Motion in Parliament that has received cross-party support, which you can see here: <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60105>. I have also written to the Speaker of the House of Commons to inquire about Peter being included in an exhibition "Pioneers: The First Asian and Black MPs" that is displayed en route to the Public Gallery. Hopefully, I'll be able to provide a future update on this.



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