

MMP



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Award-winning



IN THE CONSTITUENCY
AT WESTMINSTER
AT THE DESPATCH BOX
CAPITAL CREDIT UNION
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

January/February 2013

The first eMagazine of any elected member in the UK

Welcome

We are now over half way through this Parliament but the work never stops as you can see in this packed eMagazine for January and February.

As always, do get in touch if you have any comments, criticisms or suggestions.



Contact me (click on the highlighted links below)



Constituency Office
31 Minto Street
Edinburgh
EH9 2BT



0131 662 4520



twitter.com/ianmurraymp



ian@ianmurraymp.co.uk



www.ianmurraymp.co.uk

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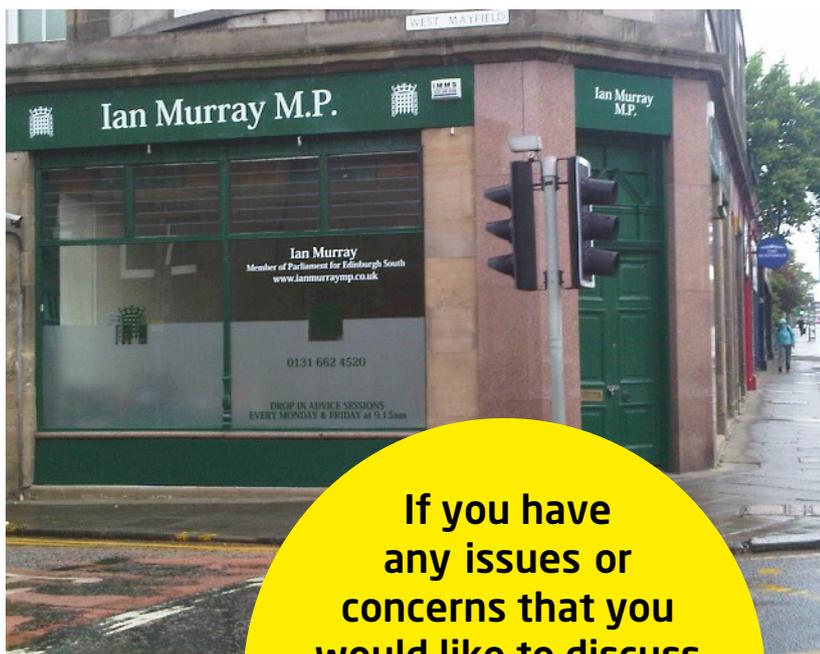
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If you have any issues or concerns that you would like to discuss with me, please do get in touch by the contact details over the page.



SEND

Something you want to discuss, perhaps something to share or you have an important question to ask? You can Tweet me by including @ianmurraymp and #MPemag

Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014

I joined Scottish colleagues last month, to promote the search for up to 15,000 volunteers for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. They will help deliver the largest sporting and cultural event ever hosted in Scotland.



Top 3 Lobby Correspondence of the Month

Every month I include the top 3 issues that constituents have contacted me about.

If you would like to see my responses, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

1. Bees
2. Energy Bill
3. Same-sex Marriage

IN THE CONSTITUENCY

Get Gilmerton Growing

Edinburgh Garden Partners (EGP) is an exciting new charity formed in February 2011 to continue and develop a garden share project which had been running across Edinburgh. Volunteer Nim Kibbler writes about the benefits that come from garden sharing

Edinburgh Garden Partners are a local charity that works with all Edinburgh City residents and aims to help regardless of difficulties with health or wealth.

They help those who have gardens but are unable to maintain them; the most common reasons are poor physical/mental health, struggling for time and lack of knowledge. The charity supports individuals by helping them to find a volunteer gardener from the bank of volunteers it recruits.

Any matches made are mutually beneficial, the garden owner receives help to keep the garden tidy and attractive and the volunteer is allocated a

place in the garden where they can grow vegetables and/or soft fruits. Both people involved in the match often share the fresh food and in time they will often begin to share good times together in and around the garden.

These matches have all sorts of benefits for those involved, such as increasing fitness, gaining gardening knowledge, decreasing social isolation and better connecting communities.

Edinburgh Garden Partners have many years of matching and supporting Edinburgh residents in garden sharing, and they've shown it to be a safe and enjoyable way to grow food and maintain the garden.

service that could help. Edinburgh Garden Partners matched her with Abby, a woman who lived only a 15-minute walk away. Abby had been on the allotment waiting list for the last 3 years and she was keen to get started as soon as possible.

Now, Nancy and Abby often chat out in the garden and talk about how the crops are doing. Abby gets all the practical experience she needs to learn how to grow her own food and is confident that, when she does get an allotment, she'll know where to start. For Nancy, she now has the joy of seeing her garden as she likes it

and enjoying the fresh tomatoes from it once again.

Currently in Edinburgh the charity has 30 partnerships and there are others looking for both gardens to grow in and volunteers to help.

If you'd like to volunteer your garden or your time, then please call 0131 220 5067 or email info@edinburghgardenpartners.org.uk



Case Study

Nancy is 89 years old and her husband is 2 years her senior. Their house has a large garden that was once full of flowers and vegetables. Five years ago they were forced to turf over the veg patch and scale back what flowers they were growing due to loss of mobility. For Nancy, this was a sad moment as she enjoyed fresh food and was proud of her productive garden.

It was a relief when she found that there was a specific

Lottery Funds to Gracemount Charity



I was delighted to hear that Libertus, a local charity in the constituency, has recently been successful in applying to the BIG Lottery Fund, securing a total of £220,513 from Investing In Communities - Supporting 21st Century Life.

Libertus' "Positive Futures" project will support isolated older people in Edinburgh to experience social inclusion and live independently in their own homes. The project will provide social groups, accessible transport, a

befriending service for those who are significantly isolated, support for people with early dementia, and information talks on a range of topics. Older people will also volunteer as befrienders and lead social groups.

BIG Lottery Fund's Investing in Communities has a primary focus on tackling disadvantage and addressing inequalities and has three investment areas: Growing Community Assets, Life Transitions and Supporting 21st Century Life. Over the next five

years, they hope this funding stream will help those individuals, families and communities in greatest need in these challenging times.

Funded through Supporting 21st Century Life, this project will support 150 isolated older people living mainly in the Liberton and Gilmerton areas of Edinburgh.

Congratulations to Wilma Nelson and all the team at Libertus and thank you for all that you do.



Petitions can be hugely important in raising awareness about a particular issue or demanding change when we believe something is wrong or not working properly. Now, fulfilling a commitment made in the Labour Party's manifesto, the City Council has introduced a petition system for Edinburgh residents with the aim of making the Council as inclusive and accessible as possible.

Taking part in or creating a petition is one way that individuals, community groups and organisations can get involved in what the Council does.

It allows people to raise issues of public concern and gives Council Councillors the opportunity to consider the need for change.

Do you have an idea for a new service or think we should make a change in the city? Then, this is your chance to have a say.

All you need to do is:

- submit a valid petition either online or in writing.
- get 500 signatures.

Your issue or idea will then be heard before the Petitions Committee and could result in changes being made to our services. So submit a petition - make a change.

Click here to visit the Council Petition website.

Time for Reflection

This month, David Hill - an entrepreneur, former agnostic, father and rugby fan who lives in Liberton - has contributed on article on the *TryPraying* campaign

This Easter, the enigmatic invitation to trypraying will appear across the city. It coincides with scores of churches uniting in 40 days of continuous prayer for Edinburgh. The same event has happened for the past two years in the period leading up to Easter - along with the sudden appearance of dozens of buses with the 'trypraying' logo on their sides. However, the idea of trypraying is aimed squarely at those who don't go to church.

These days many people don't consider themselves religious, but will probably pray when they need help or just to find out if it's true. To help people out, a 7-day prayer guide has been produced which

is now used by many in Scotland to pass on to friends and family with a few words of encouragement - 'Why don't you try praying for a week and see what happens in your life?' A free copy can be obtained from their website. The idea isn't to prove that God exists by answered prayer - but to invite people to an experience of God. I experienced this in quite a radical way.



The slogan on the buses has had a polarising effect. Some claim they've been encouraged to pray for the first time in years. Others, mostly in the atheist and secularist

camp, are highly offended at the simple invitation. However, "The stories that have come back to us have been amazing," comments David Hill, a former agnostic and coordinator of the campaign, adding with a touch of irony, "It's almost as if someone is listening when people pray."

Ian Murray has commented that the churches in S. E. Edinburgh do an amazing job but they don't boast about it. Christians believe that prayer can have a radical effect on individuals and communities, and so the campaign has nothing to do with self-promotion, but everything to do with believing for a better world.



trypraying.





ROYAL BLIND
KIDSCENE
INTEGRATED
AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

Blackford Brownies

In December, I visited the local Brownies from Blackford Division. We discussed lots of issues, including the importance of local community. Following my visit, I received some posters and letters from them, detailing what they had learned recently.



Are you in need of childcare in Edinburgh during the upcoming Easter Holidays? Well look no further, because Kidscene After School Club is expanding its services to include a Holiday Club for the Easter, Summer and October holiday breaks.

Kidscene provides a safe, secure, relaxed and fun environment for all children aged 4-16.

There are a variety of facilities on offer to suit children of all ages and abilities, including an arts and crafts room, playroom, quiet room, soft play area, swimming pool, sensory garden and enclosed outdoor play areas.

Royal Blind is the Edinburgh-based charity whose mission it is to build a community in which blind and visually-impaired individuals are fully included and lead fulfilling lives.

Kidscene's Holiday Club is open from Monday-Friday 8.30am to 5.20pm and costs £21 per child for a full day and £12 for a half day. For further information, please contact Kidscene Manager Lisa Donoghue on 07785 618 832

Warrender Baths Success



Members of Warrender Baths Club enjoyed success at the Scottish Schools swimming championships in East Kilbride. Congratulations to all the swimmers who participated and finished in medal winning positions.

The Edinburgh Reporter

Last month, local news website *The Edinburgh Reporter*, interviewed me to discuss some local and national issues. You can watch the interview by clicking the play button below.



TURNOVER....
Credit Union can
be the Solution



www.ianmurraymp.co.uk

With Bold Action Required, Credit Unions Can Be the Solution to the Pay Day Lending Crisis



Following on from my 'payday lenders' piece in last months edition, I'm delighted to included an article by **Capital Credit Union's Chief Executive Marlene Shiels.**

She describes the importance of credits unions in tackling predatory legal loan sharks.

Capital Credit Union was registered in June 1989 and was originally set up to serve local authority staff employed by Lothian Regional Council.

Since 2002 it has been providing quality, affordable, accessible financial services to anyone who is living or working in the Lothians and Scottish Borders - a population of almost one million.

Capital is the third largest credit union in Scotland and is one of the five largest in Britain today. It has over 18,000 members, assets in excess of £19 million, employs 18 staff and works with 45 "sponsoring employers" including The Scottish Parliament, Scottish Government, five local authorities and a range of voluntary and commercial organisations.

Capital has been at the forefront of many innovations including the credit union current account, credit union mortgages, and more recently introducing products to combat pay day lenders. This was in fact launched at the Scottish Parliament in 2011. Capital, since 2006, has been a key stakeholder in the delivery of financial services to people who have been financially excluded. It provides financial services to over 3,000 people through a

contract with the Department of Work and Pensions.

This year, as a result of new legislation introduced in January 2012, Capital will extend its services to a greater number of people and, for the first time, provide membership, services and products to local businesses. The organisation, which is not-for-profit, is regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

THE CURRENT POSITION REGARDING PAY-DAY LENDERS

On more than one occasion I have sat in front of people who in their own words, 'wanted to end it all' because of the situation they had got into with pay-day lenders. Their debts had spiralled out of control.

Rarely do people end up with just one pay-day lender and, in my experience, most have two or three. In the most extreme case I have seen, one person had 10 pay-day lenders and had descended into a whirlpool of debt.

Those who get involved

.....
"Quite how an interest rate of 4,000 per cent helps anyone should be a key question asked of those who charge it."



quickly see a problem without a solution, after the initial relief of thinking their financial worries were being addressed.

Quite how an interest rate of 4,000 per cent helps anyone should be a key question asked of those who charge it.

Credit unions are one possible solution to this crisis with interest rates capped by law at no more than 26 per cent. They, along with other organisations, are there to help people out of debt, not create more. Around four million people in Scotland already have access to a credit union so alternatives and solutions are readily available.

Unfortunately there are so many channels open to pay-day lenders to attract new customers with clever marketing and advertising on both TV and radio and it upsets me greatly to see a local, high-profile football club promoting one on its shirts. Social responsibility seems to have been cast aside in favour of sponsorship pounds.

THE DAMAGE CAUSED

The impact of pay-day lending is not just financial, but also social, affecting people's health. Those who come to the credit union office are quite obviously under a great deal of stress with many claiming their financial worries

are affecting their work and general well-being.

Pay-day lenders prey on people in vulnerable situations and not just those who are considered to be in the low pay bracket. This is a problem that affects people across social boundaries and is likely to get worse given the current economic climate.

The ability of many to manage their monthly household budget is seriously impaired and, after 'collecting' a number of pay-day lenders, many are turning to Protected Trust Deeds (PTDs) as a solution. What they do not appreciate is that their credit rating will be in the gutter for six years thereafter. This may be the right solution for some but certainly not for the majority we come across. It is another factor to be considered in tackling the debt crisis engulfing Scotland.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

There is no doubt that bold action is required to stem the tide of pay-day lending and Dundee City Council's stance in blocking staff from accessing pay-day lenders websites should be applauded.

Our recommendations for the Scottish Government are as follows:

- To take a stance similar to Dundee City Council by banning adverts for payday lenders on all digital media and SG premises. To encourage all local authorities to do the same.
- To promote credit unions to staff, constituents and the wider Scottish Public as an ethical alternative source of borrowing and saving.
- For every elected politician to join and support their local credit union.
- To consider, as part of the Bankruptcy and Diligence Act consultation, making Credit Unions preferred creditors.
- To instruct schools to have financial education as part of their curriculum.
- To promote a public awareness campaign on the implications of the high cost of credit to health, wealth and long term ability to borrow.



More Than They Bargained For

I was delighted to act as a volunteer at Shelter Scotland's Morningside shop, helping to sort donations, price items and put out stock - much to the delight of staff, volunteers and customers!

The Edinburgh shop, famous for selling high-end designer goods, recently held its first sale selling a Vivienne Westwood dress, Prada shoes, a Burberry coat and many other designer goods for a fraction of their retail price.

I was pleased to have the opportunity particularly given Shelter's 30th anniversary this year, and be able to see at first

hand the terrific work being done by the staff especially given the diverse and wonderful nature of the donations that support this excellent organisation.

Since I became the Member of Parliament for Edinburgh South I have seen the essential work Shelter Scotland does to help people in their hour of need. In these tough economic times and with a chronic lack of housing, Shelter Scotland provides invaluable support to families who suddenly find themselves homeless or in desperate need of housing advice. I would like to say a big thank you to the staff for helping

me through my sales apprenticeship. Get along and pick up a bargain or two safe in the knowledge that every penny will help others.

Graeme Brown, Director of Shelter Scotland, said: "We were excited to welcome Ian to meet our team of dedicated staff and volunteers and hope he enjoyed his time at the Morningside shop. Like many charity retailers, our shops are predominantly staffed by hard working volunteers, who give up what little time they have to help others. I'm sure the staff, volunteers and customers in Morningside appreciated Ian's hard work."



Click here to visit the
Shelter Scotland website



Click here to follow
@shelterscotland on Twitter



I have been informed by the Council's Street Naming Section that there is a requirement for 6 street names for the new Cala development on the Scottish Water site.

You can read the guidelines for naming here: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/1714/street_naming_guideline

So, it's time for local residents to get their thinking caps on so that a list of suitable suggested names can be compiled for discussion by the Community Council prior to them being submitted through the neighbourhood partnership. At this stage it is not known

whether they will be Avenue, Drive, Crescent etc. It is the initial name that is of interest, i.e. Braid or Buckstone.

In general, new streets should be named after people, places or events associated with The City of Edinburgh. Proposed names should meet one of the following criteria:

- To commemorate local history, places, events or culture, and in particular any that pertain to the site
- To strengthen neighbourhood identity; or
- To recognise native wildlife, flora, fauna or natural features related to the community.

If you have any suggestion for names relating to the previous or current use of the site, historical associations or landmarks nearby or indeed any other suggestions, please let me know. This is an opportunity for all you amateur historians to make a lasting mark on the area.

For more details on how to get involved with Fairmilehead Community Council, who are helping in the search for new names, you can email Norman Tinlin at secretary@fairmileheadcc.org.uk. To get in touch with the Council's naming team directly, email streetnaming@edinburgh.gov.uk

Friends of Braid Hills

Welcome to new local group, the Friends of the Braid Hills. The group has been formed for everyone who lives beside, or walks in the Braid Hills, or who cares about the biodiversity & management of our hills.

The group had their first meeting at the Braid Hills Golf Clubhouse at the end of January.

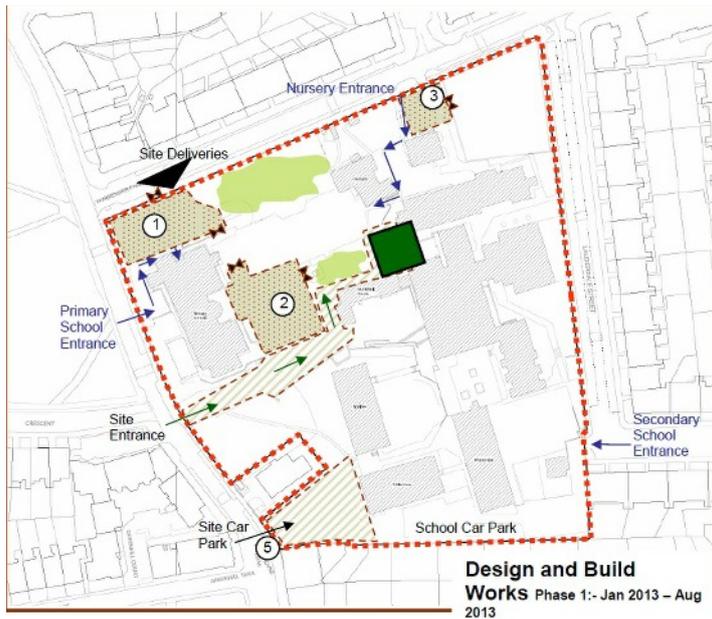
They hope to commission a biodiversity audit of the hill & pull together local knowledge with other species/habitat data,

including data from the Wildlife Information Centre.

I look forward to working with the group in the months and years ahead in promoting and protecting our beautiful landscape.



As many residents will be aware, construction work is due to start on the James Gillespie's Campus this year.



This project is being taken forward by Hub South East Scotland Limited with Morrison Construction Scotland being appointed as Tier 1 contractor.

The initial work will see the creation of the new nursery and games hall for the Primary School with a completion date of August 2013.

The main construction programme is planned to start in August 2013 and, as part of this, temporary units are being installed in the existing high school car park to provide additional decant accommodation during the first phase of the main works programme, with a new substation installed where the recycling centre is currently situated. More information on this stage of the project will be provided nearer the time.

Primary School Project

The primary school project includes a new nursery building, which is being constructed in the existing primary school car park. This means the existing entrance on Warrender Park Road will become the main construction site entrance during these works.

To allow deliveries to take place, a section of the existing wall will be dismantled but this will be

fully reinstated as part of the complete refurbishment and repair of the historic boundary wall. During the construction period, two parking spaces at the construction entrance will be lost.

The main entrance to the school during construction works will be on Whitehouse Loan.

James Gillespie's High School Campus - Enabling Works

Since the new school is being built in a number of phases, arrangements have been put in place that will see senior pupils at the school decanted to the former Darroch School at Tollcross for most subjects during the main construction programme.

Some temporary accommodation will be required on site for pupils during the build programme and this will be installed on the existing school car park. This work is due to take place in July 2013.

Existing entrances to the school site will be used during the construction programme and this means there is no need to reduce on-street parking.

A construction site office will be set up between Bruntsfield House and the primary school for the duration of the three year construction programme.

The existing car park, which is accessed via Whitehouse Loan, next to the Children First building will be the contractors' car park. This car park will be used purely for contractors' cars and vans and no construction vehicles or materials will be stored in this area. The entrance to the car park will be improved as it is currently a narrow entrance.

The Parent Council and School have advised me that parents and local residents will be kept updated with regular newsletters. These will include contact details that can be used if you have any issue or concern that needs to be addressed.

Everyone is looking forward to the gradual development of the new campus which will provide a modern setting which will allow our young people to develop and learn.

Strathearn Post Office



I recently received notification from Royal Mail regarding their plans to close the Strathearn Road Delivery Office and relocate the collection service to the South East Delivery Office at Bridge End, off Old Dalkeith Road. I have notified local constituents, many of whom are rightly concerned about the proposals. I am also working closely with the Grange Association, who have done a superb job in passing on as much information as possible to the local community.

I have spoken with the Royal Mail's Scottish Director to express my concerns about this proposal and the particular impact it will have on local elderly and disabled residents. I know that hundreds of local people use the collection service at the Strathearn Road Delivery Office every month as they are out most of the day and cannot receive deliveries. They will now have to travel a considerable distance to the proposed new site, and this will be particularly difficult for those without cars.

The Royal Mail has stated the reason they are looking to close the Strathearn Road site is due to a shortage of parking bays for customers and delivery vehicles. The Royal Mail state they need better access for their delivery vehicle fleet as there is a significant increase in parcel volumes, while letter usage is in decline.

I can assure local residents I am actively campaigning to keep the Strathearn Road Delivery Office open as a first step. However if it was to close I have asked the Royal Mail for certain assurances:

- Offer *FREE Re-delivery on a day of the recipients choosing.*
- Look at providing a local place where parcels can be collected e.g. a local Post Office or secure shop.
- An Increase in Opening Hours at the relocated site to enable greater accessibility to local residents who work normal Mon-Fri hours.
- An increase in *FREE customer Parking Bays* at the relocated site making it easier for people to collect any parcel safely and quickly.
- Royal Mail Staff must be retained with no compulsory redundancies.

I understand that the potential closure would not happen for several months. I would welcome your views on this issue so that I can make further representations to the Royal Mail in an attempt to have them look again at the decision to close the Strathearn Road Delivery Office.

AT WESTMINSTER

Last month saw us just over halfway through Parliament, with the Prime Minister and Deputy

Prime Minister attempting to re-launch their Government.

But no amount of re-launching can obscure the reality that people are facing across South Edinburgh and the rest of the UK.

Sadly, their failure means economic growth has been downgraded for this year and every year up to 2016, and our credit rating has also been downgraded. This means the UK is having to borrow £212

billion more than they planned and the benefits bill is set to soar by £13.6 billion higher than forecast.

Next month, the Government will give a tax cut to the wealthiest - worth on average £107,000 to 8,000 people earning over £1 million - while hard-working families on low and middle incomes are being asked to pick up the bill. Most recently, the Chancellor tried to claim he was making scroungers and benefit cheats pay the price for cutting the welfare bill, but that quickly unravelled when the truth was revealed. Two-thirds of people



hit by the cuts in work. The truth is that David Cameron has introduced a Strivers' Tax - a one-earner family on £20,000 stands to lose £279 a year as a result of his tax credit and benefit reforms.

10p Tax

But there is another way. In a speech last month, Ed Miliband outlined a fairer tax system that works for everyone. As well as cancelling the millionaire's tax cut and the slashing of working tax credits, Labour would introduce a mansion tax on homes worth over £2 million and use the money to cut taxes for working people on low and middle incomes, benefiting many basic rate taxpayers in Edinburgh South alone.

We also need to change the culture in our economy so that everyone knows that, when you play your part and contribute to the economy, you will be rewarded. This means tackling vested interests, improving vocational training and supporting businesses that create quality, sustainable, middle-income jobs.

Bedroom Tax

As many will be aware, the Government are pressing ahead with their unfair bedroom tax. With this tax due to come into effect in April for tenants of working age, many people have visited my advice surgeries to say they are understandably concerned about how they and their families will be affected.

This tax will cut the amount of housing benefit that people receive if they are deemed to have a spare bedroom in their council or housing association home, potentially affecting a number of people in our constituency.

Thousands of people are vulnerable to this change including separated parents who share the care of their children and who may have been allocated an extra bedroom to reflect this. Also affected will be couples who use their 'spare' bedroom when recovering from an illness or operation, foster carers because foster children are not counted as part of the household for benefit purposes and families with disabled children. Those affected are likely to lose an average of £728 per year.

I believe this bedroom tax is unfair and the Government needs to think again before it's too late.



Here in Edinburgh South, we are privileged to have the world class Kings Buildings of Edinburgh University, which are leaders in science and engineering. Some of the current crop of PhD students and Senior Researchers were shortlisted for the Parliament Science Committee's "SET for BRITAIN" poster competition.

The overall aim of SET for BRITAIN is to encourage, support and promote Britain's early-stage and early-career research scientists, engineers and technologists who are the

"engine-room" of continued progress in and development of UK research and Research & Design, and ultimately of UK plc. Many will be Britain's future scientific and technological leaders and others will clearly be leaders in other fields. Such researchers are a vital asset and investment for the UK.

SET gives them an opportunity to present and discuss "ground-breaking" and frontier UK research and R&D to Members of both Houses of Parliament at Westminster. It also fosters

Pension Reforms

I was concerned to learn over recent weeks that research by the House of Commons has revealed the true cost of last week's pensions reforms on women.

Local women born in 1952 and 1953 will not be eligible for the single tier pension since they are due to retire in 2017, before the state pension reforms come into effect. Men born during the same period, however, will qualify. The news comes after the government claimed that "we have to be absolutely transparent [about who will lose]", yet they have failed to make clear the full consequences of the planned reforms.

The unravelling of this latest pensions announcement is the second time this government has been caught trying to hide the full impact of its disastrous policies on pensioners following the Granny Tax. I'm deeply concerned that some women will be nearly £2,000 worse off compared to men.

At the end of January, I spoke in the Commons debate on Europe. Europe is a hugely important issue but as the economy hurtles towards a triple dip recession, the government have decided to create economic uncertainty that could damage any recovery and the long term prospects for economic stability. Click the play button to watch my contribution



greater dialogue and engagement between early-stage researchers and Members both in Westminster and in their Constituencies. They receive a brief introduction to Parliament and can discover also how Parliament deals with science, engineering, medicine and technology.

Congratulations to all the King's Building researchers who were shortlisted.



Visit the **SET for Britain** website



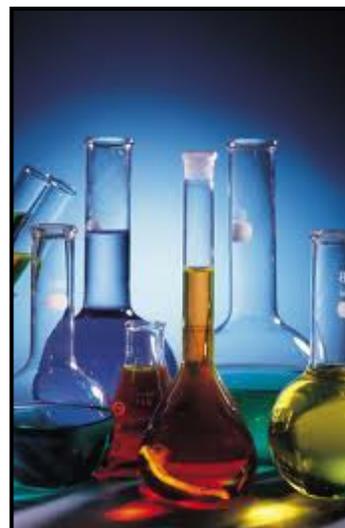
Last month, I signed a Book of Commitment in the House of Commons, in doing so pledging my commitment to Holocaust Memorial Day and honouring those who died during the Holocaust.

Sunday January 27th marked the 68th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Nazi concentration and extermination camp which is the site of the largest mass murder in history. In the weeks running up to the day, the Holocaust Educational Trust placed a Book of Commitment in the House of Commons, giving MPs the chance to honour those who were persecuted and killed during the Holocaust and encouraging constituents to work together to combat prejudice and racism today.

In signing the Book of Commitment, I paid tribute to those who perished during the Holocaust and honoured the extraordinary Holocaust survivors who work tirelessly to educate young people about what they endured, through the Holocaust Educational Trust's Outreach programme.

In the weeks leading up to and after Holocaust Memorial Day, thousands of commemorative events were arranged by schools, faith groups and community organisations across the UK remembering all the victims of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. This year, people have also been encouraged to honour those communities that have been destroyed by genocide and reflect on the importance of coming together to oppose prejudice and hatred.

It is vitally important that we both remember and learn from the appalling events of the Holocaust - as well as ensuring that we continue to challenge all forms of hatred and bigotry.



Out of Sight, Out of Mind



The charity Hope and Homes for Children is shining a light on a little known but an important issue which I am proud to support.

I was shocked to learn that 80% of children in institutions and orphanages across Central and Eastern Europe and Africa are not actually orphans but have been given up by desperate parents who feel they have no other option because there is no support available to them.

It is unthinkable that we should expect any less for children globally than we expect for our own children - all children should have the opportunity to grow up in a family, not an institution which causes them irreparable damage.

They have made a short film of the event. Click the play button to watch the video.



BEATING HEART DISEASE



Rock Up in Red

The British Heart Foundation is the nation's heart charity, dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change and providing vital information to help people care for their own heart health.

February was national heart month and a time when the British Heart Foundation (BHF) encourages the nation to think about their own hearts and the hearts of those around them. They established "Rock Up in Red" - a brand new "wear red day" to raise the issue of a healthy heart. I "rocked up" in red in support of the nation's heart charity which raises both funds and awareness in Edinburgh South and across the UK.

For further information, visit the "Rock Up in Red" website.



I was delighted to join UK AIDS activists asking Why Stop Now? on World AIDS Day back in December.

I spoke with activists about how far we have come in the HIV epidemic, with 8 million people now accessing HIV treatment, and AIDS-related deaths declining, from a peak of 2.2 million in the mid-2000s, to 1.8 million in 2010.

But we also still have far to go, with 7.6 million still going without the life-saving medication they need. That is why I joined with the UK activists in asking the government Why Stop Now?

Lotti Rutter, of the Stop AIDS Campaign said "We have come so far, and we also have a unique opportunity now to see the epidemic sent

into decline by the end of the decade. That's why we need a UK blueprint for the AIDS response. The UK needs to demonstrate its commitment, and map out exactly how it will scale up the right investment and ensure all people living with HIV, including the 100,000 people living with HIV here in the UK, are reached with the services they need." It is critical that investment in HIV and AIDS is sustained so we can save millions of lives.

The Stop AIDS Campaign is a coalition of 80 UK non-governmental organisations, faith-based and academic agencies, which have been working at the heart of the global response to HIV and AIDS for 25 years.



Click here to visit the *Why Stop Now* website

Climate Week

4-10 March 2013

Climate Week is a supercharged national campaign to inspire a new wave of action on climate change. Thousands of events and activities are taking place throughout the week of 4 to 10 March 2013, planned by organisations from every part of society. Showcasing real, practical ways to combat climate change, the campaign aims to renew our ambition to create a more sustainable, low-carbon future.

I'm proud to support Climate Week which is backed by every part of society - with musicians like Paul McCartney, the NHS to the Met Office, the TUC to the CBI, Girl Guiding UK to the National Association of Head Teachers. During the first Climate Week in 2012 over 3,000 events were attended by half a million people across the UK.

The prestigious Climate Week Awards recognise the most inspirational and impressive actions taking place in every sector of society. The judging panel contains figures such as Tony Juniper, Special Advisor to the Prince of Wales Charities, International Sustainability Unit, the former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, and the Bishop of London.

The Climate Week Swap is a new element to the campaign for 2013, highlighting the positive impact that swapping clothes, books, toys, DVDs and other items can have on our environment. Run a swap event in your workplace, with your community group or at home and save resources from going to landfill. All those who register a Swap event will be entered into a draw to win a swap with a celebrity.

There are a number of other elements to the campaign. Bubble and Squeak for Climate Week is encouraging people to make the food that they eat a part of the solution to climate change. They can do this by joining in the call to action of eating a low carbon meal during Climate Week, either by using up leftovers to make Bubble and Squeak or by cooking food made from local ingredients or less meat and dairy. The Climate Week Pub Quiz will be run in hundreds of pubs and workplaces.

You can get involved right now by participating in a Climate Week event in the local area.



Click here to visit the *Climate Week* website



Or email for further information.

One week to show how
we can combat climate change



Referendum - Section 30 Debate

The 'Edinburgh Agreement' signed by First Minister Alex Salmond and the Prime Minister last year provides the basis for a legal referendum to be held by the Scottish Government.

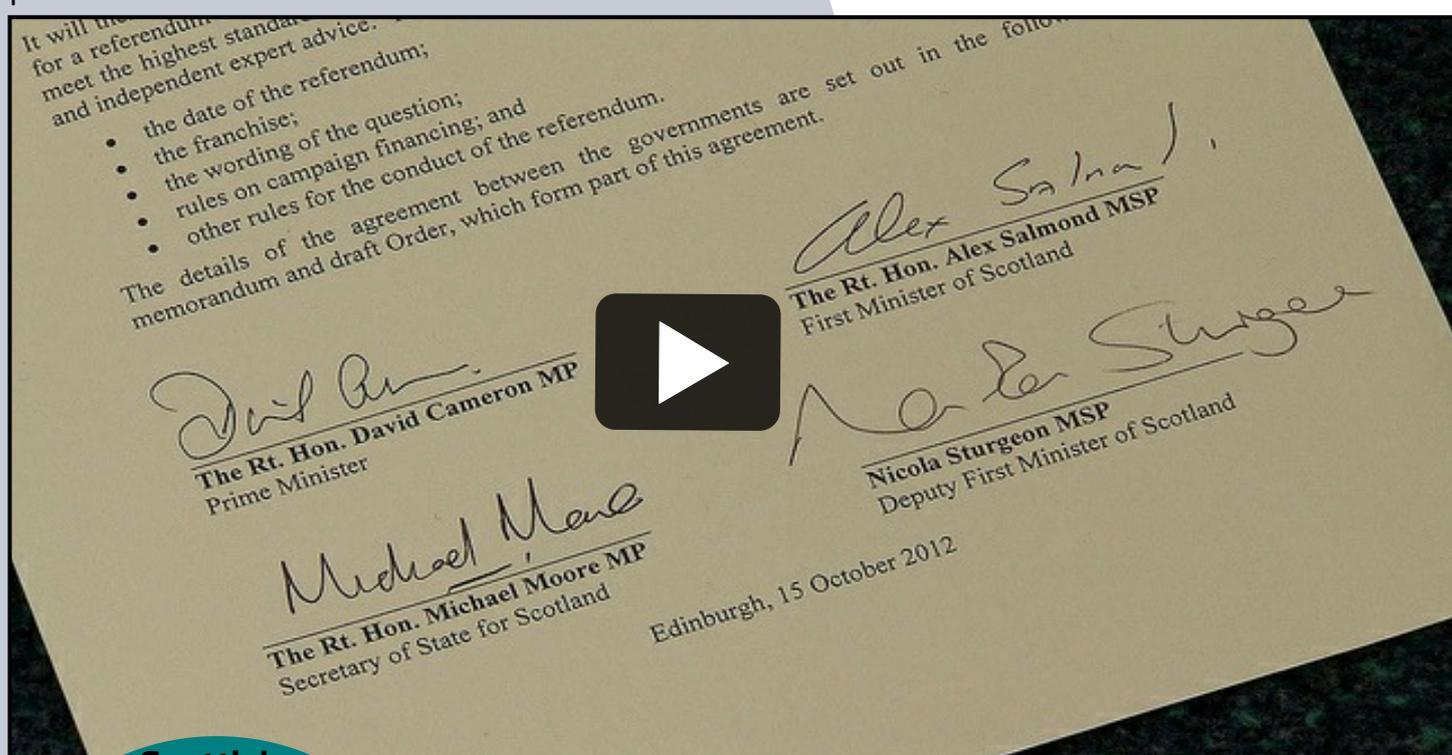
In January, MPs had the opportunity to consider the part of the Agreement - the Section 30 order - which devolves the power to the Scottish Parliament

to have a single question referendum on separation by the end of 2014.

I absolutely agree with the principle of devolving the power to hold the referendum to the Scottish Parliament. This will be a referendum made in Scotland and will settle this question once and for all.

I used my speech to highlight that it is also essential that the recommendations of the Electoral Commission are respected, particularly with regard to the wording of the question and funding of the campaigns.

Click the play button below to view my contribution.



Scottish Questions

I asked the Secretary of State Michael Moore about the bedroom tax. Click the play button:



Deputy PMQs

I asked the Deputy Prime Minister about proposals to recall MPs. Click the play button:



International Development Questions

In December, I asked a question to the DfID team. Click the play button:



AT THE DESPATCH BOX



Business, Innovation & Skills Questions

Click the play button to watch my question about Royal Mail privatisation

HMV

At the start of the year, like many I was saddened to see the news that much cherished music high street retailer HMV had gone into administration. Thoughts must go to the staff at what must be an extremely difficult time.

Upon the announcement of administration, it was confirmed that gift cards and vouchers would not be accepted. I felt that this was very unfair on consumers, many of whom may have received such a gift only a matter of weeks previously. I wrote to administrators asking them to reconsider their decision not to accept vouchers and gift cards. I received a very prompt response for which I am grateful and Deloitte are to be commended for the diligent work.

Later on that week, Deloitte confirmed that they had reconsidered and would now accept vouchers. I was delighted that HMV and their

administrators had reconsidered, and I'm sure consumers will be relieved that they will be able to use those Christmas gifts after the initial disappointment.

This situation has raised the issue about companies entering administration and the acceptance of gift vouchers.

Whilst it is important that administrators can do their job, it is important to remember that consumers need to be protected.

Blacklisting

In January, I spoke in the House of Commons on behalf of the Shadow Business team in raising the issue of blacklisting. Blacklisting is a stark reminder that workplace practices which should have no place in a modern society continue to scar our national decency.

There have been recent revelations that construction firm Sir Robert McAlpine consulted with the Consulting Association - an organisation that was

created to compile the blacklist - over the prominent Quartermile development in the city. This is very concerning.

Whilst it has not been confirmed that Edinburgh construction workers were refused work because of this, it does not take away from the severity of the fact that the firm ran names against the list. With other such prominent projects ongoing, such as the new Forth Crossing, it is vital that we ensure that blacklisting is not occurring on these sites.

I think Ministers in Holyrood and Westminster need to do all they can to ensure justice is sought and make sure that this never happens again by instigating an investigation urgently and that is why I have written to the First Minister and pressed the government in today's debate.

Click on the button below to view my contribution.



Scam Mail Debate

I recently participated in a Westminster Hall debate on the topic of scam mailing. Many of the people who are most affected by this abhorrent practice are the elderly and vulnerable. It is an issue that is serious and hugely distressing for both the victims and their families. I have been contacted by many constituents who have fallen victim to scam mailing, the consequences of which can be truly devastating.

As well as scam mail by post, scammers are now taking to new methods to target people - young and old - including 'phishing' emails and scam adverts on social networking sites. Once someone is drawn into a scam mail, they are often put on a 'suckers list'. What started out with one letter, soon avalanches into dozens of letters a day from all over the world. The language is enticing - "Guaranteed Winner", "Time Sensitive Document", "Reply Immediately To Release Your Award" and various other slogans and logos which are plastered over the documents, making it appear to be a genuine document.

It is really important that people are on their guard and know that help is available as scams can bring real upset and misery to their victims. I would urge constituents to remember:

- Stop, think and be sceptical. If something sounds too good to be true it probably is.
- Do not be rushed into sending off money to someone you do not know, however plausible they might sound and even where an approach is personalised.
- Ask yourself how likely it is that you have been especially chosen for this offer - thousands of other people will probably have received the same offer.
Think about how much money you could lose from replying to a potential scam - it's not a gamble worth taking.

I believe we should all continue to be determined to take the fight to these crooks. The lives that have been blighted have been too many. Whilst for lots of us, the scam envelopes and message are easy to spot as too good to be true, we have to remember those who are taken in by such scams and lose considerable amounts of money, money which is already in short supply for them.

To view my contribution, please click the play button below



Pub companies debate

We know that 25 pubs are closing across the UK every week. We know that there will be many job losses particularly amongst the younger generation as well. Having run several pubs prior to my embarking on a political career, I employed many students who worked part-time to assist their studies. Sadly, their misery is a consequence of the serious breakdown in the relationship between the pubcos and lessees with a growing body of evidence showing that the 'beer tie' plays a significant part in explaining the decline of the pub trade.

Pub companies - pubcos - are the branded chains of pubs which account for the majority of pubs in the UK- and their tenants and licencees and for tenants to be allowed to choose between a tied and non tied option, to ensure fair and open business opportunities for tenants and small brewers alike. The beer tie is the practice whereby PubCos contractually oblige a licensee to purchase beers, wines and spirits through the PubCo rather than on the open market. This theoretically resulted in tenants paying a below market rent for the premises but making up the difference through increased unit prices

In January, Labour forced a parliamentary debate on it and I concluded the debate. Just 12 months previously, MPs had a robust debate on this issue and the House agreed unanimously for a review of self regulation and for a statutory code to be considered. The Government finally listened to those calls by announcing plans for an independent Adjudicator to address unfair practices in the industry.

Click the play button to watch my speech.



SPRING FLING 2013

Saturday 9 March

10.00am – 3.00pm

Polwarth Parish Church
38 Polwarth Terrace

Aged over 50?

Looking for inspiration?

*A new hobby/interest? Want to get involved,
be activated, feel motivated?*

Stalls, giveaways, tasters & demonstrations

Café

Admission Free

Organised by South Edinburgh Arts Fair Association with Merchiston Community Council,
supported by South West Neighbourhood Partnership. Poster design by P2B Craiglockhart Primary School

seafa@hotmail.co.uk

If you have any suggestions for local events which may be of interest, please drop me an email with the details and I'll be happy to post it on this page.

NEW
BRUNTSFIELD COMMUNITY
GREENGROCER
(NOT FOR PROFIT)



Dig In



We are planning to establish a community-owned and supported, not-for-profit greengrocer in Bruntsfield.

OUR AIM IS TO SUPPLY LOCALLY-SOURCED PRODUCE and TO FOSTER COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Please support us by coming along to our

PUBLIC MEETING

Monday 18th March 2013
7pm at the Bruntsfield Hotel, Cardoon Suite

For more information find us online at:

www.diginbruntsfield.co.uk

or pick up a flyer at Nippers shop (corner of Forbes Road and Bruntsfield Place)

www.facebook.com/diginbruntsfield

IAN MURRAY MP

Your Member of Parliament for Edinburgh South

Twice Weekly Advice Sessions

Every Monday and Friday at 9.15am

At 31 Minto Street

Just drop in - no appointment necessary

Every 3rd Saturday of the month

9am - Gracemount Leisure Centre

10am - Liberton High School

11am - Constituency Office, 31 Minto Street

Noon - The Open Door, 420 Morningside Road