

MMP

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Monthly eMagazine of Ian Murray
Labour Member of Parliament for
Edinburgh South

INSIDE

IN THE CONSTITUENCY

AT WESTMINSTER

CHILDREN'S EYE HEALTH WEEK SUCCESS

XMAS SPECIAL

November

Proudly supporting

THE
PROSTATE
CANCER CHARITY

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

The first eMagazine of any elected member in the UK

Welcome

Welcome to the fourth edition of my eMagazine which keeps you up-to-date on my work in Parliament and in the constituency.

This edition covers November and December, I have included both audio and video features which I hope are of interest. If you have any problems accessing them, please email me. As always, if you have any comments, suggestions or feedback then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

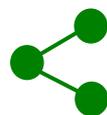
Contact me (click on the highlighted links below)



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Several constituents have asked me to include more political stories. This eMagazine is deliberately NOT political but is an update on my role as a local Member of Parliament. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss or debate any political issues. I'm always happy to provide information on any issue.

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.** Proposal for homeless hostel at Liberton Gardens
- 2.** Fuel Poverty
- 3.** Andrew Lansley's "Secret NHS Report"

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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.



Click the play button
to watch a clip...



Throughout November, I grew a moustache in support of the "Movember" campaign.

On December 1, I had it shaved off live on BBC2's Politics Show.

The *Movember* campaign - which started in Australia - is now a global health campaign and last raised £11.7 million last year.

Too often men are reluctant to talk about their health but *Movember* is a fun way of sparking conversations and raising the profile of the cancer conditions that affect men.

I have to admit that I couldn't wait to have it removed! Never again!!!!

IN THE CONSTITUENCY

Student Surgery



Last month, I held my second monthly Student Surgery at the union at Potterrow.

A number of students came along to chat. Many raised concerns about recent incidents on the Bruntsfield links which I know many students use to get to and from Edinburgh University. I have been in touch with the police who have apprehended the individual responsible.

I am now working with the Council and Police to look at the possible introduction of CCTV in

the area. If you would like further information, please do get in touch.

I know that the Edinburgh University Students Association (EUSA) has established a "walking bus" so that concerned students can travel together safely across the Meadows and Bruntsfield links therefore avoiding having to walk home alone after dark.

Finally, I would like to wish all students who are sitting exams this winter the best of luck.

As readers will know, local parks across South Edinburgh are thriving and many have received the "Green Flag" status.

I've neglected to include the Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park in that illustrious category.

This year, the park received it's second consecutive Green Flag. Many thanks go to Donald MacKay and all members of the *Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park* who look after the park. They hold monthly clean-ups on the second Saturday morning of each month from March to November.

Congratulations to all involved who do so much to ensure that local people are able to enjoy all that the city's parks and recreation areas have to offer.



Another
...Green
Flag!

Guddlebusters

Congratulations to cousins Alison Munro and Jane Bremner who recently decided to combine their professional and organisational expertise to launch *Guddlebusters*.

Their aim is to help people create order in their homes by tackling guddle in all its guises. They have already acquired some very happy (and organised!) clients.

For further information, visit their website www.guddlebusters.co.uk. I wish them all the best for the future.

Liberton Homeless Hostel proposal abandoned

I have been contacted by many constituents in the Liberton area who have raised concerns about the proposals for a homeless hostel at a local B&B.

I fully support the need for appropriate homeless accommodation in Edinburgh but this has to be achieved through a strategic plan where there are sufficient support services in the local community.

Having contacted the Council with residents concerns, I understand that they will not be taking this proposal forward as they appreciate that there is a lack of local support services.

Supermarket Surgery at Morrisons

Early last month, I joined my MSP colleague Kezia Dugdale for a *Supermarket Surgery* at Morrisons in Gilmerton.

As I have mentioned previously, I know that many constituents are unable to make it to my regular surgeries. I hold over 200 a year but I want to be as accessible as possible and such surgeries are a way of doing this.

Thanks to the staff who were so accommodating. I hope to hold further surgeries at other locations across the constituency in the New Year, including Waitrose and Sainburys.

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Super-fast Broadband for South Edinburgh

I recently met with Executives from BT who announced last week that South Edinburgh is to benefit from super-fast broadband of up to 80Mbps.

This is a major investment in infrastructure and it is hoped that it will give businesses a tremendous boost. It will also benefit families in the constituency as it will help improve quality of life and open new doors through online learning and fast access to information and services.

If you would like further information on super-fast broadband, please visit BT's website - www.superfast-openreach.co.uk

Tesco Vouchers for Local Schools

I was delighted to present pupils from James Gillespies, South Morningside, Bruntsfield and St Peter's primary schools with equipment collected from Tesco vouchers at the local branch in Bruntsfield. I was joined by Store Manager, Samantha Tippitt.

Tesco's long-running and very successful scheme last year gave over 440,000 pieces of useful equipment worth a massive £9.3m to schools and clubs across the UK and it's great that schools in South Edinburgh have benefited as well.

URGENT - James Gillespies High School update

Following consideration of some of the points raised during the planning process, revised drawings have now been published on the Council's planning portal at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning (application ref: 11/02586/FUL).

You are able to submit comment on the applications by writing to:

Planning, G2 Waverley Court,
4 East Market Street,
Edinburgh, EH8 8BG.

The closing date for comments is December 23.

A sack full of cash for the Open Door

The Open Door raised an incredible £715 at its Christmas Fayre on Saturday 5th November. This is a fantastic effort particularly in the current economic climate. I understand that many of those attended picked up a bargain or two!

Children from St Peter's RC Primary and South Morningside Primarey provided some fantastic Christmas pictures to decorate the windows so thanks to them for their contribution.

The fundraising doesn't stop there. There will be four food hampers raffled in December so all are invited to come along and try your luck. The Open Door are hoping to raise £8,000 by March 2012 with the total standing at just over £5,000 at the moment.



Kaimes Environmental Project

I was delighted to be informed this month that the Kaimes Special School Association has been awarded £3,875 grants from the Big Lottery Fund.

It will allow the school to organise arts-based recycling project for pupils and their parents. It'll be an fantastic way for them to explore environmental issues. Congratulations to Mary Walters and the staff, parents and pupils. I know the project will be a huge success.

New Inch Sports Club Opened

I was also invited along to the opening of Inch Park Community Sports Club (IPCSC) Grand Opening. Sadly, I was unable to attend but have been involved in this project for many years.

The Club's opening is the culmination of several years hard work by a number of volunteers and Liberton Rugby Club. The complex provides a much-needed multi sports facility for people across South Edinburgh and our thanks go to those volunteers, particularly Malcolm Gillies, Chair of IPCSC.

I wish the Club all the best for the future and look forward to using the facilities in the New Year (to work off those Xmas festivities!)

Sainsbury's FareShare Food Drive

In November, I took part in Sainbury's FareShare Food Drive. In there efforts to reduce food waste, Sainbury's are donating any surplus food that is fit for human consumption to charities such as FareShare to ensure that it is not wasted.

Nationally, Sainbury's collected 1.2 million meals which will make a real difference to people suffering from food poverty this winter. As well as donating the food items, we will be donating sums of money to FareShare and supporting them with the logistics involved with such a large amount of food.

It was fantastic to be involved in the food drive. I'd like to congratulate store colleagues and customers who made a donation to FareShare, along with everyone who volunteered to help out with the drive.



NEWBATTLE TERRACE SUBSTATION

Over the past few months, I have been working with local residents along with Scottish Power to try to find a solution to best mitigate the sight of the new electrical substation which is an eyesore for many local people.

Residents have met with Scottish Power representatives and have been provided with a number of options. The slatted idea seemed to be the most popular. Scottish Power have gone away to refine the idea and will come back soon with updated proposals. Scottish Power have been very positive in their response to the concerns voiced by residents and I am hopeful that the mitigation measures will benefit the local community, given that it is situated within both the Grange and Merchiston Conservation areas.

Thanks to Scottish Power and all residents who have been in touch and for the constructive dialogue which has taken place.

WINTON PLANNING APP SUBMITTED

Following the pre-application consultation by Miller Developments for the Greenbelt site to the east of Winton, they have now submitted a full planning application to the Council.

During the summer, I wrote to residents to make them aware of the proposals and I have received a number of objections. Many are angry and frustrated that this creep on the Greenbelt is happening yet again. I believe that the developers have submitted their proposals again because of the loss of the Burdiehouse Greenbelt development area on appeal from the Scottish Government earlier this year. The flood gates are now open following this appeal and the Council are almost powerless to prevent its continuance.

The application has been accepted by the Council which means the deadline for comments is 2 JANUARY. You can view the application on the Council's planning portal [here](#). You can make comments through the portal or by writing to the Head of Planning with the reference 11/03948/FUL to the address below. I would be grateful if you could copy me into any correspondence with the Council on this matter:

John Bury
Head of Planning
City of Edinburgh Council
Waverley Court
4 East Market Street
EDINBURGH EH8 8BG

I know that the wonderful Fairmilehead Community Council are looking closely at this and they can be contacted at Secretary@FairmileheadCC.org.uk

NOV/DEC 2011 | MP

DISAPPOINTMENT AS ABBOTSFORD COURT TELECOMMS MAST PUSHED THROUGH

Many residents in Merchiston will be aware of the proposals for telecomm mast at Abbotsford Court. The local community have been campaigning on this proposal since March this year. As the application was refused by the Council back in April, the applicants submitted an appeal with the Scottish Government's Planning Reporter Unit. After a lengthy appeals process, the Scottish Government's Planning Reporter has granted the application. This now gives the applicant the go ahead to erect the mast and accompanying cabinets.

I know the depth of opposition to this application as I corresponded with both the Council's planning department and Scottish Government Reporter on behalf of a huge number of concerned constituents. Sadly, this has been pushed through by the Scottish Government. It is all the more frustrating that this has been granted bearing in mind that the Reporter's site visit was unaccompanied. I was disappointed that this was the case given the level of concern and the number of representations put forward by the local communities.

I have a real discomfort at the way in which the planning system is currently operatin. The odds seem to be stacked in favour of the developers with little regard to the voice of local people. A democratically elected Council Planning Committee refused the application but it was sequently granted on appeal by unelected ciivil servants. This can't be fair. This does give an equal unfairness to the good developers as the public are so disenfranchised by the planning system that they often get bogged down due to the general mistrust of the system.



Over the past few months, I have been pursuing the Council who promised to thoroughly investigate the causes of the flash flooding in Balcarres Street in the summer.

The long-awaited report has now been produced. You can view it online [here](#). It has been found that there were not any major defects in the drainage system but the problems were due to the intensity of the rain that fell.

The Council have now committed to an improvement plan and are to work with Scottish Water in finding a permanent solution. It will be some time before that work is started. In the meantime, the Council has recommended that demountable temporary flood defences be attached to some buildings which will provide protections to householders.

BALCARRES STREET FLASH FLOODS REPORT PUBLISHED



AT WESTMINSTER

Fears about the economy, cuts to services and rising unemployment continue to dominate the talk in Parliament - on the floor of the House of Commons and in the tea rooms.

Last month, many thousands of people demonstrated across the UK about the Government's plans to make those in the public sector pay more for their pensions. No-one disagrees that changes are needed - but outside Parliament the many thousands of protesters were a clear sign of the Government's failure to properly negotiate.

The Scottish Government cannot avoid responsibility on this either, as it is they - through the Scottish Public Pension Agency - who had more draconian cuts than the current government in their submission to the Hutton Review.

Of course, David Cameron's seeming failure to negotiate compromise was also apparent this month at the European Summit. His inability to reach any agreement risks putting the UK on the sidelines of Europe and that, potentially, could exclude us from the economic decisions that will have important consequences in the UK.

In Parliament, I have raised concerns about the government's plans to

change employment law, so that it's easier to dismiss staff. I have also spoken on further issues that include the need for accessible debt advice and support and the Government's decision to cut Winter Fuel Payments.

I have also led for the Opposition on the Daylight Saving Bill Committee, which is scrutinising legislation that would produce an academic report on the pros and cons of changing our clocks. Should the report produce positive conclusions the Government would have to legislate for a trial period to go ahead

The impact of the changes would then be monitored to see if the changes should be made permanent and all devolved Administrations have an effective veto to safeguard geographical differences.

“The Scottish Government cannot avoid responsibility on this either [pensions]...”

FROM THE DISPATCH BOX

I've been settling into my new role as a Shadow Business Minister. There have been a number of government announcements in recent weeks which I have been responding to.

At the end of the month, I participated in a debate on trade issues for developing countries with the EU. A new regulation is currently being considered and Parliament debated the matter. All parties are very much in the same position and agree that developed countries like the UK, need to make sure that trade is made easy for poor and developing countries to help their economies grow whilst ensuring that they adhere to certain human rights and social conditions.

Christmas is a tough time for families, when many are most hard-pressed for cash and they often seek credit from payday loan companies and other unscrupulous lenders. It was timely therefore that the Commons held an

afternoon's debate on debt advice and debt management. It was an extremely good debate with a number of MPs contributing who have some first hand experience of helping people with such problems. **You can hear my contribution to the debate by clicking the play button to the left.**

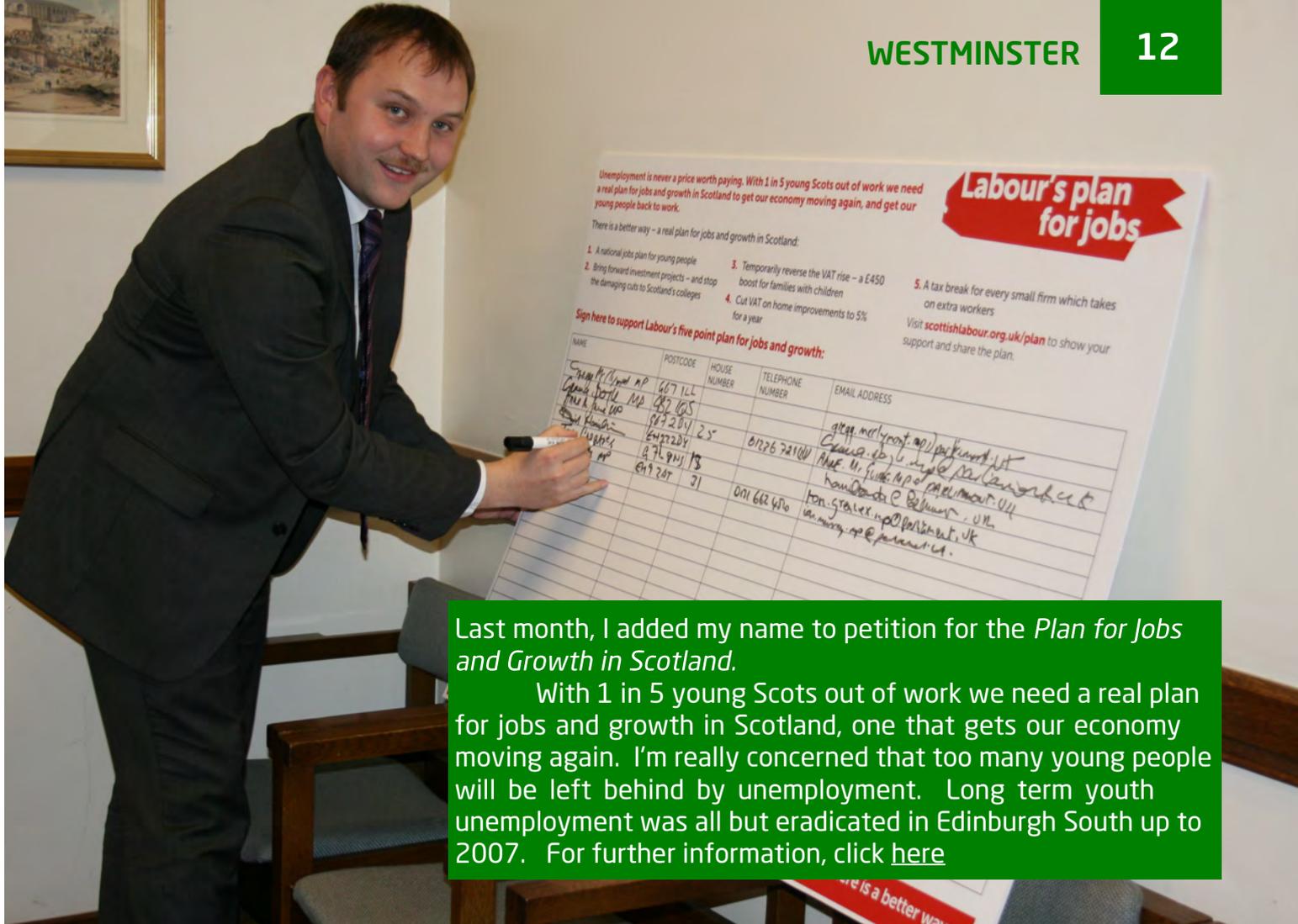
I also had the opportunity to question the Government on its policies on employment law at questions in the Commons. **To listen to my question, please click the play button below.**

My responsibilities also see me speak outside the Chamber and I was invited to speak at a Trades Union Conference (TUC) on vulnerable workers a few weeks ago. At a time when the economy is stalling, many employers see it as an opportunity to water down employee rights. You can read my speech [here](#).

[Listen to my speech during debt advice debate...](#)

[Listen to my question to the during debt advice debate...](#)





Last month, I added my name to petition for the *Plan for Jobs and Growth in Scotland*.

With 1 in 5 young Scots out of work we need a real plan for jobs and growth in Scotland, one that gets our economy moving again. I'm really concerned that too many young people will be left behind by unemployment. Long term youth unemployment was all but eradicated in Edinburgh South up to 2007. For further information, [click here](#)



I was delighted to meet volunteers from Action Aid, a charity dedicated to eradicating global poverty.

The map represents the continent of Africa and proves a useful example to remind us of the levels of debt which these impoverished countries experience.

We had a very fruitful discussion and we discussed a number of points which I shall be putting to both the Chancellor and Secretary of State for International Development in the coming months on the issue of aid and global economic justice.

EYE CATCHING

13

SUCCESS WITH EDINBURGH SOUTH CHILDREN'S EYE HEALTH WEEK

As previewed in last month's eMagazine, I launched my new initiative to encourage children across South Edinburgh to get their eyes tested.

With the support of The Opticians at Marchmont, I joined pupils from St Peter's Primary on their visit to Steven Hislop's Opticians.

A child who's four, five or six might think something like blurriness is the norm. Therefore, a quick visit to the Opticians can pick things up which can help resolve problems resulting in educational attainment improving.

The campaign aimed to raise awareness that it is free to take your children to an optometrist and I'm hopeful that some parents will have found the information useful. I was shocked to discover that, despite being free,

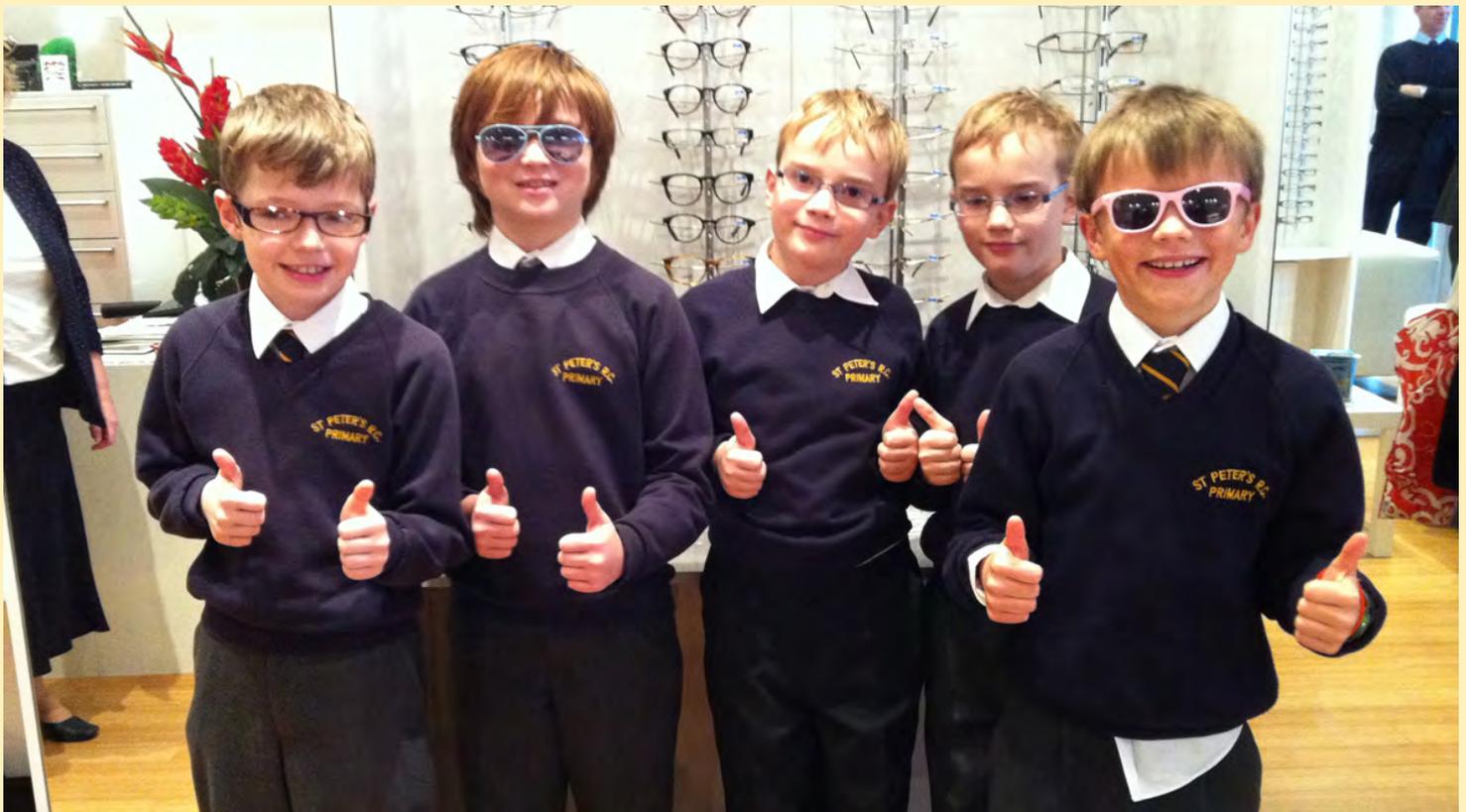
only 53% of children in the UK have ever had a proper eye test, compared with 90% who have visited the dentist.

I'm extremely grateful to Steve Hislop, Owner of the Opticians at Marchmont for his support and advice. He has been a real driving force behind this initiative to get as many kids tested as possible because there are a lot of underlying issues that are missed in the screening at school.

Speaking to the parents that attended with their children, many said that they thought it really worthwhile to get their kids checked.

I'm also very grateful to the Association of Optometrists, part of the Optical Confederation and Eye Health Alliance who endorsed my Children's Eye Health Week in support of it's efforts to highlight the fact that NHS eye examinations in Scotland are free to all UK residents.

For further information, please visit the Association of Optometrists website [here](#) or please do not hesitate to contact my office by usual details.





**Many thanks to
Headteacher Mrs Laing and the pupils from St Peter's Primary**



I've had an absolutely tremendous response to my annual Christmas card competition.

This year's competition saw a record number of children taking part with

going to every class and school winning design.

Seventeen South Edinburgh schools took part including: Buckstone, Bruntsfield, Craigour Park, Edinburgh Steiner School, George Watson's,

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

over 2,000 young artists from 17 South Edinburgh Schools entering. I'm extremely grateful to the generous sponsorship from Sainsbury's at Cameron Toll and the support from MC Squared.

The winning entry was chosen by Caroline Henderons, Sports Presenter from the STV News Team.

Each pupil that has entered has received a free gift, with additional prizes

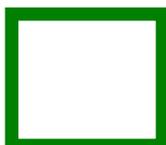
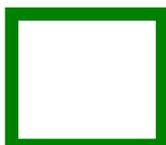
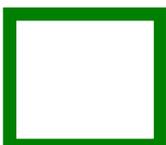
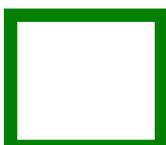
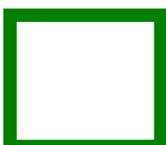
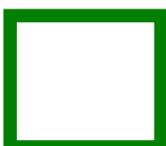
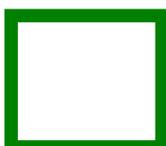
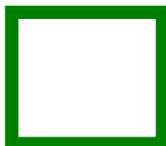
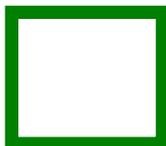
Gilmerton, Gracemount, Liberton, Pentland, Preston Street, Royal Blind School, St Catherine's, St Crispin's, St John Vianney's, St Peter's, Sciennes and South Morningside.

The teachers, parents and all the young people who took part deserve special praise for the continued success of the competition. Special thanks also to Angela Allan, Store Manager at Sainsbury's Cameron Toll and Caroline from STV.





Click the boxes below to see photos of the Xmas card comp presentations...



Last week, I was delighted to present our winner Demi-Leigh with her prize at our special awards ceremony host by Angela at Sainbury's. The supermarket have also donated chocolate santas to all 2086 entrants, a selection box to the 100 class winners, Smurfs DVDs to the 17 school winners and extra prizes to winners and runners-up.

Over 4,000 copies of my card are being sent around the world. You can see a selection of the entries on display in Sainbury's Cameron Toll during the festive period.

If you can't make it along to the store, STV will be showcasing the 17 School winning designs at www.stv.tv/edinburgh.

Caroline Henderson said that it was a tough choice but it was great to see such creativity. She said the cheery snowman put a smile on her face.

"The teachers, parents and all the young people who took part deserve special praise"

It was a fantastic to see how delighted the children and their families were.

These cards are sent to thousands of people and it makes me hugely proud to showcase the artistic talent in our schools.





This year's
winning entry
was designed by
Demi-Leigh
Mason, P7 from
Preston Street
Primary

Season's Greetings
from Ian Murray MP



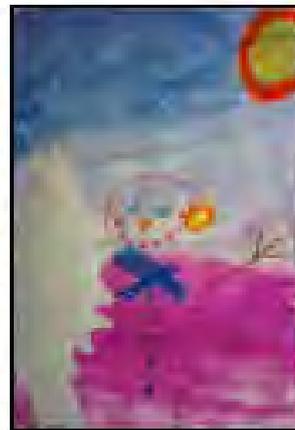
Rachel Turnbull
Pentland Primary, P6



Khadijah Ahmad Zaki
Liberton Primary P4b



Oliver Martin
George Watson's
College, P6J



Taylor Ferguson
Gilmerton Primary,
P4M



Tomo Perry
Sciennes Primary,
P1B



Leila Meredith
South Morningside Primary, P6a



Sean Fraser
St Crispin's Special School



Moana Schaefer
Edinburgh Stiener School, Class 6



Blake Ross
Craigour Primary
P4/5



Lily Grieve
Bruntsfield Primary,
P6A



Katie Jane Girvan
Royal Blind School



Jeremiah Strauss
St Peter's Primary,
P2B



Zainab Ahmed
Buckstone Primary,
P7L



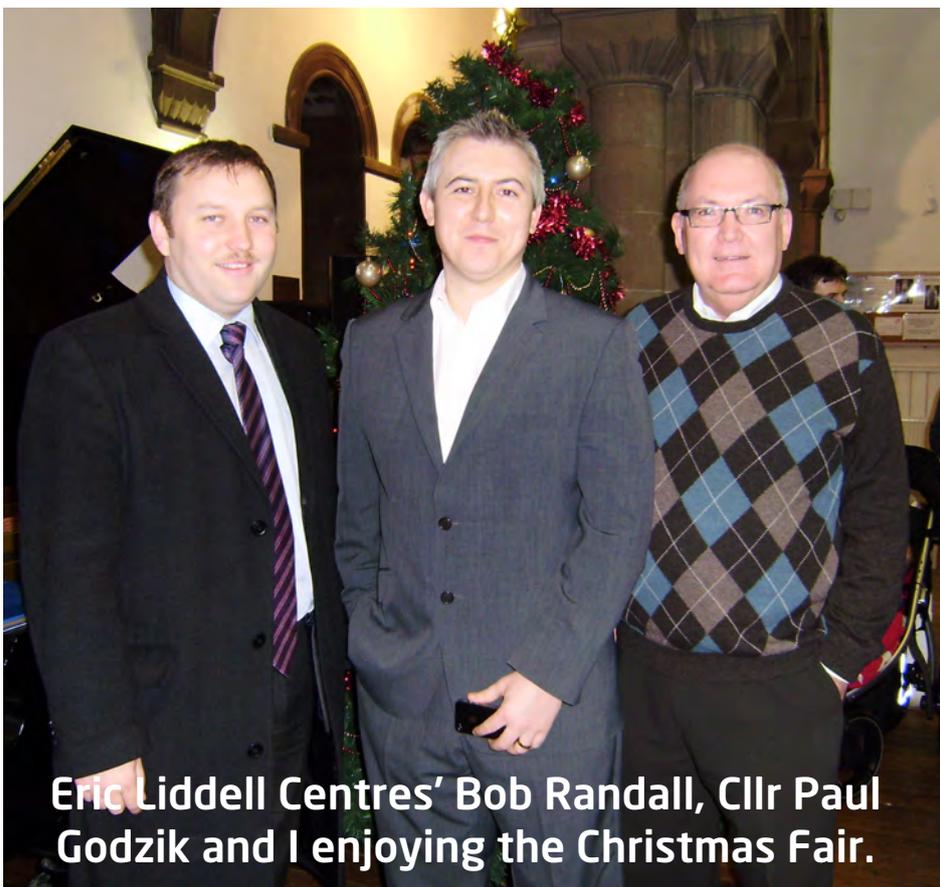
Ansiaah Placiego
St Catherine's
Primary, P2



Lewis Watson
Gracemount Primary,
P6A



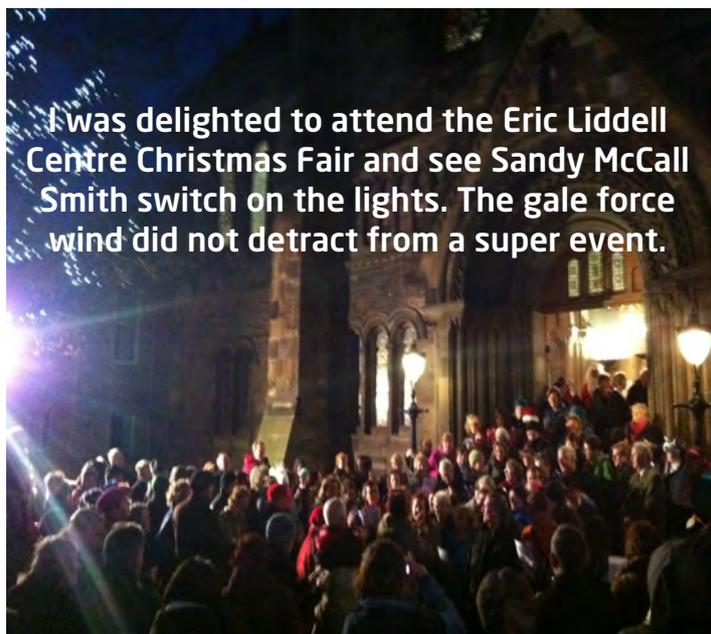
Jason Stewart-Evans
St John Vianney
Primary, P7F



Eric Liddell Centres' Bob Randall, Cllr Paul Godzik and I enjoying the Christmas Fair.



Stuart Munro from Marchmont Hardware who switched on the Marchmont Sciennes Community Council lights which I compered. There was wonderful music from James Gillespies pupils and the Sciennes Primary Choir. Well done to the all organisers.



I was delighted to attend the Eric Liddell Centre Christmas Fair and see Sandy McCall Smith switch on the lights. The gale force wind did not detract from a super event.

I have also attended some wonderful Christmas Fairs at Gracemount, Bruntsfield, St. Peters and South Morningside Primary Schools. A great Christmas carol service at Craigour Primary and heard the wonderful Gilmerton Singers at the Gilmerton Community Centre Xmas fair.

It was also a great pleasure to turn on the lights at St Peters Episcopal Church and attend the nativity plays at St Crispins and the Royal Blind School. Valley Park Community Centre had a well attended Christmas lunch.

All the budding actors, actresses and singers from all the Christmas entertainment really got the Xmas spirit flowing.

XMAS EVENTS

Throughout November and December I have had the pleasure of attending a number of xmas events across the constituency. Thank you to all for your kind hospitality.



The Salvation Army Band entertained the crowds at St Peters Church

*"Dear Ian,
Thanks for featuring
the South Edinburgh Loft
Insulation grant scheme in
your last newsletter. After
reading this, I contacted the
Energy Saving Trust and they
have already installed loft
insulation free of charge"*
Gillian, Liberton

Marie Curie
Hospice - New Year's
Day Concert January 1,
2012.

The Hospice are holding a
uplifting Viennese Gala with
soprano Elena Xanthoudakis.
Tickets £10 - £28, Usher
Hall 7pm. To book call
0131 228 1155

*"OMG, I didn't
expect to hear from
you til after the year.
Thank you again, totally
gobsmacked at how
quickly you responded."*
Michelle,
Burdiehouse



Merry Christmas, Eid Mubarak, Happy Chanukah and Happy New Year for 2012

With very best wishes

Ian Murray

&

all the staff at Minto Street

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