



Transport

As well as being the SNP spokesperson for Energy my new portfolio also includes Transport and Infrastructure. Although many of the related competencies are devolved, Westminster policies loom large over all aspects of these matters. This means I need to consider Scottish Government priorities and try to influence the Westminster agenda. For example, the Scottish Government funds Network Rail but has no direct influence over the operations because it is accountable to the UK Department for Transport. This is a matter I will continue to pursue, especially as it's estimated that up to £100m a year could be saved.

In discussions with Westminster, Transport Scotland identified essential rail projects estimated at £4.2bn over a five year period. Instead Westminster have only allocated £3.6bn, which also represents a real terms cut compared to the existing budget. It is shocking that they can throw an extra £1.5bn to Northern Ireland "based on need" [not buying the votes of the DUP], and yet Scotland's rail needs are not provided for despite their being a due diligence process to evaluate need. Our railway is more important than ever to Scotland's growth. Another priority is extending high speed rail to Scotland which would have major benefits. That's why I have called on Scotland's thirteen Tory MPs to step up and back growing demands on the UK government to extend HS2 beyond the border and into Scotland.

As per the photograph above, I was on a panel of Speakers at an SNP Conference fringe event. The topic was the future of rail, and was chaired by David Clegg, assistant editor at the Daily Record. He did a fine job and wasn't shy at putting me on the spot! I was joined by experts from the rail industry which made it a daunting but very enjoyable experience.

Energy Cap

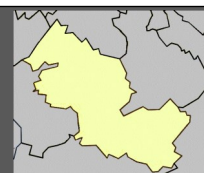
As SNP Spokesperson for Energy I was glad to be able to welcome the announcement that the UK Government is going to implement an energy price cap, to stop customers getting ripped off by high standard variable tariffs. For anyone in Kilmarnock and Loudoun struggling to pay bills this may help give some breathing space. However, the reality is that this is all it will do.

The supplier actually only makes up a small component of the end bill. The biggest profits come from the big companies who actually provide the gas and electricity through the network of pipes and cables. Therefore, to really keep bills down we need to tackle those excessive profits.

I have also challenged the UK Government to allow onshore wind and solar to bid for future electricity auctions. Why pay 2 or 3 times the amount of electricity by signing for new nuclear projects? It makes no sense and we also need to change the transmission costs which penalises development in Scotland. I also observed that we cannot

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allow companies to use the cap to increase costs or for customer service to get any worse. Overall however, with continued cross party working hopefully we can find ways to make this work and continue to work the small Tory majority as a lever for change.

Public Sector Energy Supplier

Another potentially good way of reducing bills is the announcement by the SNP that they will set up a publically owned company that can supply energy. With the Scottish Government backing this could potentially be a big player in Scotland and extra competition can only be a good thing. And with any profits being kept by the taxpayer then this is even better.

VAT charges for Police and Fire Services in Scotland

The SNP, including myself have campaigned hard to get VAT removed from the charges to the Police and Fire Services in Scotland. Exemptions have been created for the Police Service in Northern Ireland, Highways England and the National Crime Agency, all national bodies, so it can be done. Although Tories have already voted against this happening for Scotland's Police and Fire Services, who wants to bet an exemption is finally confirmed this budget and attributed to the work of the new Scottish Tories?! I know who will have done the real work but the end result is the most important aspect.

Centrestage

I was lucky enough to be able to make time to go and catch the Centrestage youngsters from Shortlees perform at the National Reclaim Conference in Westminster. This was because their work in Shortlees started with a grant from the dormant bank accounts in 2012. So successful has Centrestage Communities been that their director Fiona McKenzie was asked to give the closing address before the young folks sang to the delegates and they received a well-deserved standing ovation.

It was great to see and co-incidentally was held at the headquarters of the Institution of Civil Engineers, so I was able to encourage the kids to take in a tunnelling exhibition upstairs too, given I am still a chartered engineer I thought I might as well see if there is a future budding engineer! Well done to all involved especially the young helpers who helped make the trip possible from a supervision perspective.



Team Shortlees from Centrestage visit Westminster



Auchinleck Community Development Initiative Jobs Fayre

Well done to the Auchinleck Community Development Initiative on their very well attended jobs fayre in the Boswell Centre in August.

I had the opportunity to meet and talk to a wide range of employers, support agencies and jobseekers. It is great to see people being given a real opportunity to find a way into work or training and the variety of jobs on offer ensured everyone was catered for.

I would encourage those looking for work in the construction industry to keep their eyes open for upcoming opportunities with Morrisons Construction when it comes time to build the new super school in Cumnock. I was advised today they will also have opportunities for apprenticeships which is welcome news for our young workforce.

Newmilns Food Festival

The second Newmilns Food Festival was certainly another hit with the public.

I was there most of the day and thoroughly enjoyed myself. There was a great atmosphere in the tents and it was also brilliant to catch up with loads of people.

To have the equivalent of the population of Newmilns attend the food festival is a fantastic achievement.

Credit to the hard working committee and it was great to see so many volunteers dressed in their "Love Newmilns" tee-shirts.



Photo: Guy Hinks Photography

The selection of food and drink on show was fantastic with many local suppliers on display and the demonstration area seem packed all day long too — I am already looking forward to next year's event!



New premises for Break The Silence

I recently attended the official opening of the new premises in Kilmarnock for the charity Break The Silence. Many thanks to all the staff for taking the time to show me around their lovely new office space in College Wynd in the heart of Kilmarnock. It was also an excellent opportunity for me to get a better understanding of the vital work they do to support survivors of rape and childhood sexual abuse. I even managed to fit in a jammin session with Provost Jim Todd in the music therapy room – although I do think Jim was just a wee bit disappointed when someone handed him a harp instead of a guitar!

"We were delighted to welcome Alan Brown MP to the official opening of Break the Silence's new premises in College Wynd. Alan very kindly took the time to speak to staff and guests and learn more about the charity and the many services it provides to survivors of rape and childhood sexual abuse. He even tried his hand at playing one of the harpsicles used in our music therapy sessions. Huge thanks to Alan for his continued support."

Alison Tait, Chief Executive, Break the Silence



Jammin with the Provost



Breast Cancer—'Wear It Pink' Campaign

Breast cancer affects so many people in Kilmarnock and Loudoun, so as a Breast Cancer Now Ambassador I was proud to take part in 'wear it pink' during October to raise awareness of the impact of the disease locally and to support for Breast Cancer Now's vital research.

Now in its 16th year the 'wear it pink' campaign has raised over £30 million for Breast Cancer Now's life-saving research helping to work towards a day that the disease will stop taking lives.

Fauzilina's Walk

I was delighted to be asked to take part in a fundraising walk for Ayrshire Cancer Support organised by Fauzilina Wark. Fauzilina had organised the walk as part of her personal challenge of walking 10,000 steps over 10 days.

Fauzilina's Story: *"I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer 10 years ago. I underwent intensive cancer treatment and still live with the side effects of the treatment. However, I am still alive and well! To mark the 10th anniversary of my diagnosis and being discharged from the Hospital, I decided to take on this challenge. This was to honour my family, friends, colleagues, fellow survivors, lost ones and especially Ayrshire Cancer Support for being there for me."*



Tribute to Sandy Ferguson

Unfortunately this event was later tinged by sadness with it being Sandy Fergusson's last photoshoot. That night he was his usual fun self and my sincere condolences go to his family. A true Kilmarnock legend and a real gentlemen he will be sorely missed.

Ayrshire Cancer Support Reindeer Dash

I've looked out my running shoes again, and have signed up for this year's Reindeer Dash in aid of Ayrshire Cancer Support which will take place on Saturday 10 December at 11.30am in the Howard Park, Kilmarnock.

Ayrshire Cancer Support provides practical and emotional support to people affected by cancer, either through a personal diagnosis or that of a loved one. Services provided, include hospital transport for people receiving treatment, counselling and alternative therapies.

The 3K fun run (walk or crawl) starts in the Howard Park and culminates in King Street, just before the real Reindeer Parade as part of East Ayrshire's festivities.



To register for the fun run and receive your free reindeer horns and flashing red nose, telephone Ayrshire Cancer Support on 01563 538008 or [click here to register online](#)



Once again Santa will visit Kilmarnock town centre. Arriving on his sleigh he will travel down King Street led by his team of beautiful reindeer before the reindeer rest in their pen at The Cross.

Santa will also be collecting letters from local children with their Christmas wish lists on Sunday 10th December from 12.30– 15.30.

It sounds like tremendous fun for all the family whether taking part in the fun run, or bringing the family along to meet Santa and his reindeer.



The West of Scotland has had close links with the Armed Forces for many years. Around 37,000 veterans and their families live in the area. Thanks to generous funding from both The MacRobert Trust and *LIBOR funding a new Welfare Service Centre has recently been opened in King Street Kilmarnock by PoppyScotland.

The centre is open to the public from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday as a one stop shop where the Armed Forces community can go to access a number of services tailored to meet their needs. Advice is offered on a one-to-one basis and is available whether a veteran, still serving, a family member, Regular or Reserve.

Many thanks to David Cooke (Welfare Manager) and representatives from the partner organisations who gave me a tour of the new centre and an insight into the specialist support they offer. Partner organisations include Defence Medical Welfare Services (Unforgotten Forces), Regular Forces Employment Association on a full time basis with clinics on a weekly basis being accommodated for Combat Stress, Veterans First Point, and SSAFA.

"The MP's visit to our new Welfare Centre was very much appreciated. I look forward to Alan visiting Poppyscotland Ayrshire again in the near future to find out more about our life-changing support for the Armed Forces community, and how our partnership approach is delivering for the local area.

It was also great to see Alan going the #ExtraMile for this year's Scottish Poppy Appeal."

David Cooke, Welfare Manager

#ExtraMile to 'Rethink Remembrance'

I joined over 90 Members of Parliament to race alongside serving members of The Armed Forces on an exercise bike to raise money for The Royal British Legion's annual Poppy Appeal.

The 12 hour bike ride was held in Portcullis House, Parliament and aimed to raise money for the Poppy Appeal. Representing Kilmarnock and Loudoun I managed to cycle 3.06km in 5 minutes—if you think I look exhausted in the photograph you would be right!!

This year's race emphasised that The Royal British Legion will once again be asking the nation to 'Rethink Remembrance' and consider the meaning of the poppy as a symbol of Remembrance and hope (www.britishlegion.org.uk/poppy-appeal-2017/)



PoppyScotland Ayrshire Contact Details

Call: 01563 598000

Email: Kilmarnock@poppyscotland.org.uk

Website: www.poppyscotland.org.uk

**fines levied on the banking industry for manipulating the LIBOR rate*



Invitation from Fenwick Primary School

Thank you to P6 pupils from Fenwick Primary School who recently wrote to me with an invitation to their school. The pupils were learning about Parliament and wanted to interview me, and find out more about my life and career as a Member of Parliament. I thoroughly enjoyed their excellent questions and they even managed to glean some humorous stories from me about the workings of Parliament—so definitely some budding journalists or perhaps even future parliamentarians in their midst!

The pupils were also very keen to give me a guided tour of their new school extension while I was there. I am very grateful to them for their kind invitation, enthusiasm and hospitality.

Wealth of Local Talent

Over the last few weeks I have managed to attend several events in the constituency that shows off the amazing local talent we have. From events such as the “Pylon” production at the Palace Theatre - a great production by local guys.

“The Beautiful Game” at Centrestage. Another fantastic performance.

Loudoun Musical Society’s production of “Jesus Christ Superstar” - a professional production put on by volunteers who have to work incredibly hard to fundraise as well as do all the production rehearsal and preparation.



It is great to be able to support these local productions and be reminded of the talent that is out there.



Scottish Renewables Westminster Reception 2017

As SNP Spokesperson for Energy I was delighted to be asked to host an evening reception on behalf of Scottish Renewables, in the Palace of Westminster at the end of October. The evening included networking ahead of some short speeches from Scottish Renewables' new Chief Executive, Claire Mack. Coming shortly after the publication of the UK Government's Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Plan, this event was a timely discussion about the role of the Scottish renewables industry in helping to meet the Government's ambitions to increase energy security, keep bills down for consumers, and cut carbon emissions. The event was very well attended and it was great to meet so many experts in this field of expertise.

Joining The Global Fight Against Cruel Cosmetics

I have signed a motion in parliament calling on the UK to lead the fight against cruel cosmetics. Cruelty Free International is urging UK MPs to support its global campaign with The Body Shop for a worldwide ban on cosmetics testing on animals which is already backed by 3 million people.

The UK was one of the first countries to outlaw the testing of cosmetics on animals, but most countries around the world would still allow cruel animal testing for cosmetics to take place. Despite the availability of approved non-animal tests and existing ingredients safe for human use there are still no laws banning animal testing for cosmetic products in about 80% of the world.

That's why I've given my support to the campaign calling for the UK Government to support a global ban on cosmetics testing. The UK government could take the lead on this by putting this issue on the agenda of the United Nations to bring this cruel and unnecessary practise to an end. Please join me in supporting Cruelty Free International's campaign to end animal testing for cosmetics worldwide. It's time to end this practice everywhere and forever. (www.foreveragainstanimaltesting.com)

Scrap The Cap Demo in London

While supporting the #ScrapTheCap demonstration at Parliament Square I was delighted to meet some dedicated Ayrshire nurses who had travelled to London for the demo.

I am glad the SNP Government are the only ones with a clear position and that is to scrap the public sector pay cap.

Labour in Wales are refusing to lift the cap unless they get more money from Westminster and Jeremy Corbyn says that is the right thing to do. While in Scotland Labour just expect the SNP to find the money even with all the other cuts the Tories are making.

And as for the Tories, they are all over the place, talking about maybe lifting it and paying different rates to different workers. So, as it stands at the moment the SNP Government are the only ones committed to doing the right thing for our hard working public





‘Keep a Step Ahead of Winter’

www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk

New research from Scottish Gas has highlighted that having no heating or hot water would be the number one disaster for households in Scotland this winter. Even so, many people have not taken action to ensure their homes are winter-ready. It's really important to keep a step ahead of winter. I want everyone to understand what help is available for them, and for their family and friends. Being energy efficient and keeping bills under control is really important, so I'd encourage people to get in touch with their energy supplier to find out what support is on offer.



Home Energy Scotland Advice

Home Energy Scotland advice is free and impartial, and helps householders to save money and help the environment by looking at how they use energy and water, and transport.

My Constituency Office can help refer householders for advice from Home Energy Scotland.

An advisor from Home Energy Scotland will then contact the householder to advise them on saving energy, reducing their bills and keeping warm, and assess for any extra support that may be available.

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Killie-ween 2017: Mischief, Mayhem and Merriment'



It was advertised as 'Mischief, Mayhem and Merriment' and that is exactly what the volunteers and organisers of this year's Killie-ween delivered.

I managed to attend the Spooky Ghost walk, which was superb and there was so much work and effort put into it. Done by volunteers but on a par with commercial events elsewhere.

I thoroughly enjoyed the evening stroll around the town centre while being entertained with historical tales from the town's past. I would like to applaud everyone involved in this Celebrate Kilmarnock activity – from the script writers, actors, costume designers, lighting and sound and everyone else behind the scenes – a huge Well Done! I'm already looking forward to next year's event.

There are always great things happening and I applaud the effort that goes in to making events such as these a success.

"Meet your MP" Events

I want to be as accessible as I can to my constituents and I really enjoy meeting and visiting as many groups as possible.

For one-to-one appointments and to discuss any personal issues you may have then please book a surgery appointment through my office—details of how to do this are listed at the bottom of this page.

As well as attending community events and holding surgeries, another good way I have found to make myself accessible is to take part in "Meet your MP" events.

I recently participated in a "Meet your MP" event with the St Andrews and St Marnock's Ladies Fellowship group. I thoroughly enjoyed my evening and if any other group ever wishes to invite me along for a Question and Answer session I am more than happy to oblige.



'Meet Your MP'
with St Andrews and St Marnock's Ladies
Fellowship Committee Members



'Meet Your MP'
with KSRH Trust Women's Group



'Meet Your MP'
drop-in event at Kilmarnock railway station

Get in Touch

Depending on your query another office may be best placed to help however I will help if I can or signpost you to the office that will get the best result for you.

Local Issues: [East Ayrshire Council](#)

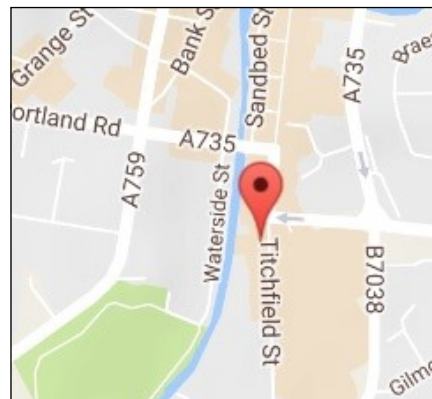
Devolved Issues: [Holyrood, Willie Coffey MSP](#)

Reserved Issues: [Westminster, Alan Brown MP](#)

To book a surgery appointment call the constituency office on 01563 501412

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Opening hours
Monday: 9am-5pm
Tuesday: 9am-5pm
Wednesday: 9am-1pm
Thursday: 9am-5pm
Friday: 9am- 4pm
Weekend: Closed



Urgent Enquiries

If you have an issue you want to raise and cannot attend a surgery, or if you need immediate help please get in touch with me or my office by email at alan.brown.mp@parliament.uk

