Foysol Choudhury MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian Region



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The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Since the last newsletter the Scottish Parliament has a new First Minister, Humza Yousaf, MSP for the Glasgow Pollok constituency. I extend my sincere congratulations to Humza Yousaf on his election. It is important to reflect on this significant moment for Scotland who will have its First Minister of Scotland from an ethnic minority background. The Summer break is only a few weeks away, the sun is out, I wish all readers an enjoyable Summer.

It has been a busy time in the Scottish Parliament I have been taking up individual, community, business and campaigning groups issues. I have submitted questions to the First Minister and Ministers, and I have spoken in the Scottish Parliament on important issues and submitted motions. I continue to carry out community visits and meetings.

I am now a member of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee. After attending a couple of meetings I am finding the committee very interesting and it gives an opportunity for individuals and organisations to influence and change policy in the Scottish Parliament. It gives voice to the public and an opportunity to directly speak and influence MSP.

I attended, laid flowers and spoke at Edinburgh's International Workers Memorial Day on 28th April. A gathering to remember those who have died at work and refresh our resolve to fight for safe and healthy working conditions in Scotland and throughout the world.





I attended a Care Home public meeting, with over 200 in the audience who are deeply concerned and angry about a proposal to privatise Care homes in West Lothian. The Scottish Government must take full responsibility as they have not given adequate funding to West Lothian IJB to provide essential services needed for the expanding population in West Lothian.

I was deeply concerned to hear about the proposal by West Lothian Leisure to close three swimming pools and Howden Park Centre. Thanks to all the hard work by residents in West Lothian the closure of Howden Park centre has been allocated funding for another year. Yet, the problem of swimming pool closures and the struggle they are facing due to rising energy costs is still prevalent across Scotland. I am committed to pursuing this issue in the coming months to ensure that the Scottish Government recognise the important health and social benefits that Scotland's pools bring.



POLICY

Since the last newsletter I have spoken on a number of important issues in the Parliament.

I spoke about the release of the Scottish Government's Scottish Connections Framework, focusing on the importance of remembering the legacy of Scotland's role in colonialism and slavery when engaging on the international platform. I also spoke on the Scottish Government's National Discussion on Education advocating for more support for teachers and Pupil Support Assistants and improvements on our narrowing curriculum that is not fit for purpose in the 21st century.

I have also spoken on important issues such as tackling the mental health crisis in Scotland, the closure of St. Michaels hospital in Linlithgow and on the importance of Historic Environment Scotland. In the coming months I will continue to raise issues of importance to my constituents in the chamber and ensure representation of the issues most affecting Scotland.

MOTIONS

This month in Parliament I have lodged motions on a number of very important issues. Most recently, I lodged a motion addressing the shortage of skilled labour in the built environment sector. This has recently received cross-party support and will be put forward for a Members' Business debate in the Scottish Parliament following summer recess. I have also submitted a motion regarding the importance of our world class heritage workforce. The heritage workforces are essential, but they are being devalued and are now in jeopardy due to the cost-of-living crisis. I have also lodged motions congratulating Spartan FC on their promotion to the SPFL, commemorating the life of Boxing legend Ken Buchanan and congratulating Diversified for their nomination of Charity of the Year at the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations Scottish Charity Awards.





CASEWORK

HEALTH

Many constituents continue to write to me about the long waiting times they and their family members have to endure to receive treatment, or see a consultant, with over 770,000 people in Scotland being on waiting lists, that is 1 in 7 Scots. The crisis in A&E continues, with recent weekly figures showing that 9,000 patients waited over 4 hours to be seen. Worryingly, a damning inspection report on the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, was issued recently. Read the report.



The inspectors made two unannounced visits and found a number of issues falling below the high standards of patient care which should be expected with the report indicating that patients were being treated in unsafe conditions, while hardworking NHS staff are being failed by the SNP Government. I will continue to raise these important issues at the Scottish Parliament on behalf of NHS staff and patients alike, who are being let down by 16 years of SNP incompetence.

HOUSING

Housing continues to be a big issue affecting my constituents, with much of my casework relating to people's struggles with poor conditions in their home. I've continued to pursue this on behalf of my constituents and have been raising where possible in the Scottish Parliament the need for more funding to improve conditions in housing across Lothian and the rest of Scotland.

I've recently held my Member's debate in the Scottish Parliament calling for a solution to damp housing and I've also lodged a motion in the Scottish Parliament to tackle the student housing crisis. I understand the deep concern and worry of my constituents, especially after the tragic death of two year old Awaab Ishak who died after mould exposure in England, and so I am committed to pursuing a solution from the Scottish Government to prevent a repeat of this tragedy in Lothian.

BANGLADESHI INDEPENDENCE





I was thrilled to sponsor celebrations in the Scottish Parliament marking the 52nd Anniversary of Bangladesh's Independence and National Day. It was a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made during the Bangladesh Liberation War, as well as a vibrant celebration of Bangladesh's culture and traditions. It was fantastic to see the Bangladeshi community in Scotland come together with others from diverse backgrounds to celebrate with music, dancing and food. It was a great night and a fantastic reminder of the links between Bangladesh and Scotland, which I'll continue to promote in the Scottish Parliament through CPG Bangladesh.

VISIT WITH PM BANGLADESH



As the chair of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Bangladesh, it was a great honour of mine to meet Bangladesh's Prime Minister, HE Sheikh Hasina. It was a privilege to meet with her and learn more about her work and dedication to important matters such as woman's equality, climate change and healthcare equity. I hope that the Scottish Parliaments Cross Party Group on Bangladesh will help improve our relationship and shared cooperation between Scotland and Bangladesh.

We also discussed Bangladesh's humanitarian response to the 2017 Rohingya Crisis and how Bangladesh can maintain support for its Rohingya refugee population. It was a great opportunity to reflect on exciting developments in infrastructure such as the Padma Bridge and discuss how Scotland, the UK and Bangladesh can build stronger relationships around industry and knowledge sharing.



A CRISIS IN HERITAGE

As Labour's Spokesperson for Culture, it was great to sponsor 'The Perfect Storm: A Crisis in Heritage' drop-in event organised by Prospect regarding its 'World Class Heritage, Second Class Pay' campaign. We all know that the culture sector has been hit hard in this cost-of-living crisis, and this is something I have raised awareness about before, like the closure of the Edinburgh Filmhouse. This drop in event that I attended helped to fully recognise how our important Heritage workforce contributes to our local communities, our nations and across the world. Scotland's Heritage sites are well loved by international visitors and locals alike and they benefit our economy greatly, for this reason I will continue to pressure the Scottish Government to secure a better deal for our Heritage workers and preserve our fantastic Heritage sector.



EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

I was delighted to be invited to celebrate the launch of the 2023 Edinburgh International Festival Programme. Inspired by the literature of Martin Luther King Jr, and his belief in people's capacity to unite, the 2023 Festival is motivated by the question, 'where do we go from here? This asks us to consider how arts and culture impact our society at this moment. I very much look forward to attending many of the performing arts this coming August, and continuing to raise awareness of the importance of arts and culture to our mental health, wellbeing, economy and Scotland's international platform for our performing arts.

EID CELEBRATION



I was delighted to co-sponsor with Kaukab Stewart MSP the Muslim Council of Scotland's Eid with Parliamentarians event in the Scottish Parliament. We all came together to hear recitals from the holy Quran and learned how we could apply its lessons to our lives, while also happily discussing the meaning of Eid and Ramadan together over some food and refreshments. Afterwards, we all shared some delicious cake, cut by the First Minister and Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar MSP. To see the community join in prayer in the Scottish Parliament and share our faith with visitors and colleagues was also a special moment for me. It was a fantastic celebration of Eid with the Muslim community from across Scotland and many guests and colleagues from all faiths, backgrounds, and political parties.

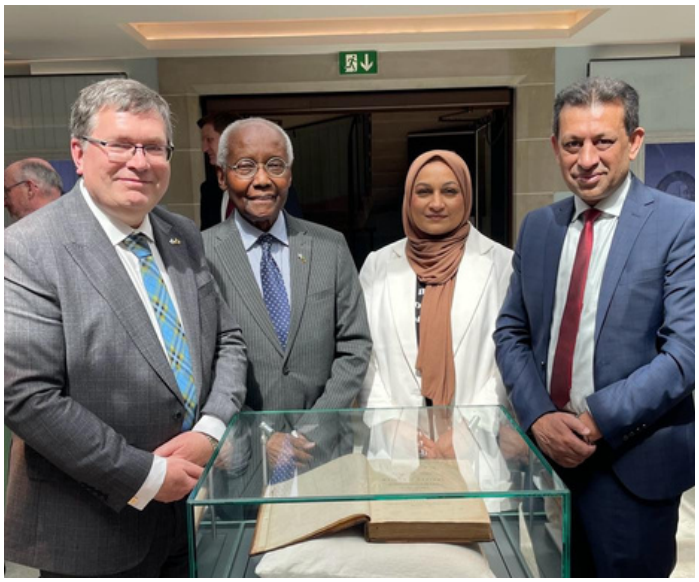


WELCOMING PRESIDENT HAKAINDE HICHILEMA

I was invited to an event by The Chancellor of Heriot-Watt University, Professor Sir Geoff Palmer, and the Principal , Professor Richard A Williams to welcome Zambia 's distinguished representative, President Hakainde Hichilema to Scotland.



The continued collaboration between Scotland and Zambia, is a testament to our shared commitment in supporting Zambia's aim to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Given Scotland's long and historical connection to Zambia, Scottish Government continues to develop and strengthen relations between our countries - building upon ties which have existed since Dr David Livingstone's presence in the country.



POSTCODE LOTTERY



I visited Postcode Lottery national headquarters in Edinburgh who employ over 400 staff. It was great to find out more about their local and international work they carry out. There's £18.4 million raised by players each month & over 11,000 good causes supported. Over £1 Billion has been raised for good causes since 2005.

LATEST ACTIVITIES



Asian Catering Federation (ACF) Networking Dinner



Eid in the Park



Hosted the #VolunteersWeekScot reception and listened to incredible stories shared by volunteers,



Attended Almond Valley CLP fundraiser in Livingston.



Reception celebrating the 10th anniversary as a Fair Trade Nation.



Supporting Sarah Boyack's Wellbeing & Sustainable Development Bill

NORTH EDINBURGH COMMUNITY FESTIVAL



I met with some great community organisations at the North Edinburgh Community Festival and learned about some fantastic work done in North Edinburgh. It was a fantastic event and inspiring to see such a great turn out.



Police Scotland



Multi Cultural Family Base

CONTACT ME

If you need help or advice with any issue or concern, get in touch and book your slot at one of my phone surgeries.

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