The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Newsletter Issue 14

Since my last newsletter, it has been a busy time both in the Scottish Parliament and in the communities of Lothian.

I am continuing to ask questions and submitting motions at Holyrood and I was in the top chart for participating in the Scottish Parliament. I am a member of two Committees and I find the Petitions Committee very stimulating, as individuals and groups have fantastic ideas and proposals which can change the policies of the Parliament.

Getting out and meeting community groups, businesses and campaign groups is always interesting and keeps me informed of the issues I need to raise and highlight in the Scottish Parliament. For example, after meeting Winchburgh residents and accepting their petition for the Transport Minister, I will continue to campaign harder for the promised train station at Winchburgh. Also after meeting LifeCare Edinburgh, in Stockbridge, I will oppose the proposal in a Scottish Government consultation Bill to charge volunteers for a PVG certificate.

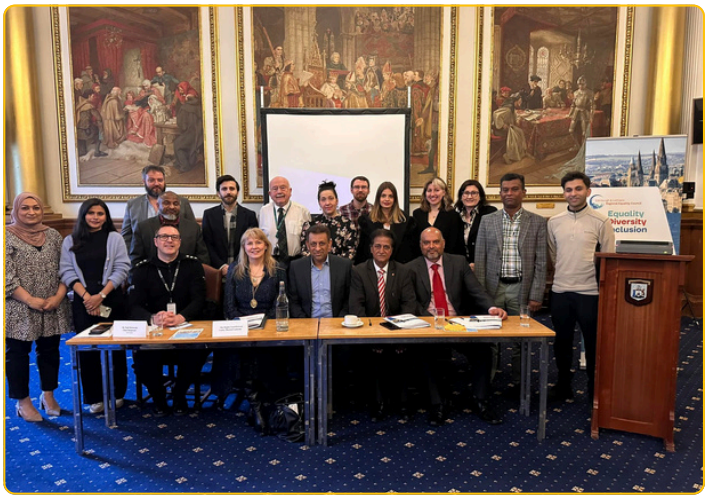
Finally, regarding Gaza, like many others I have been angered, upset and feel helpless as the war in Gaza continues and thousands of lives are lost, including children. The world cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of innocent civilians and the violations of international law which have occurred in Gaza. It is time for the United Kingdom to demand an immediate ceasefire, aid to be delivered and end arm sales.



Community



Following Ramadan, Eid Mubarak was celebrated in Scotland, the UK and all around the world. I attended amazing EID Celebrations. Thanks to the Pakistan Society for organising and Lord Provost for hosting in the City Chambers.



At ELREC's AGM, in the City Chambers, it was agreed I would continue to Chair Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council. I am looking forward to an exciting coming year, championing equality, fairness, justice and opportunities for our communities.



I joined the Telugu Association of Scotland in Granton for their Ugadi celebration of fantastic music, dance and South Indian food.



There was a fantastic turnout for the opening of Winchburgh Marina. Great investment for leisure and sports in West Lothian.



Fantastic to meet Philippa and two Scottish Youth Parliament MSYPs to discuss the work of the Scottish Youth Parliament, setting out their priorities for the year ahead.



I held a surgery in Asda Leith and Asda Livingston and was hearing from the community about issues which matter to them, such as GP appointments and tackling anti-social behaviour.

In the Parliament



I argued for the benefits of Community Asset Transfer, highlighting the Heart of Newhaven, in the Scottish Parliament. I pushed for the Scottish Government to include urban community assets in the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill.



Committees play a vital role at The Scottish Parliament , especially in hearing evidence sessions. As part of the Inquiry into the A9 dualling project, the Citizen Participation & Public Petitions Committee I questioned former First Minister Alex Salmond.

Portfolio



Scotland and Canada: I met Katrina Burgess, Diplomat from the High Commission in Canada. Great discussion on trade, climate change and education, and on how we can further deepen our ties between Scotland and Canada.



Museum On the Mound: I visited the Museum on the Mound and it was truly inspiring to see their dedication to public education, particularly in spreading awareness about Scottish colonial histories.



I chaired the Anti-Racism in the Workplace Scotland Conference, to discuss how we enact change.



North Edinburgh Arts, Passion4Fusion & Project Esperanza are leading the way in developing anti-racist strategies. Honoured to sponsor their drop-in session for insightful discussions on how we can do more to create an anti-racist third sector.

Campaigns



I met Care Sector workers, who play a vital role in our communities, yet they are let down by the Scottish Government removing £38m from the Fair Work in Social Care budget.



Following a visit to LifeCare Edinburgh, I have raised concerns about the proposal to charge Volunteers who need membership of Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG). This should not be implemented.



Winchburgh Train Station: I have enquired with the Council, the developers and the Scottish Government. I have also reached out to Transport Scotland but regrettably have not had a response. I am continuing to pursue this alongside campaigners.



Dolly's Library: Fantastic to meet Dolly's Library to learn how they're inspiring lifelong love of reading by gifting books and bringing libraries to communities through community partners.



CONTACT ME

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

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