



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

David Torrance MSP

SNP MSP for Kirkcaldy Constituency



Monthly Newsletter

October 2016



Only a few short months from this year's Scottish Parliamentary elections, and the political landscape in Scotland has changed drastically. My Holyrood colleagues and I have constantly needed to adapt to new dynamics in a fast-changing political climate. It's a challenging time.

The UK and Scottish Governments are pulling in two very different directions. While the UK is increasingly retreating from the world, possibly through a "Hard" Brexit, the Scottish Government is looking to secure and protect our relationship with our European neighbours.

These changes are significant for residents in Kirkcaldy Constituency, as leaving the European Union could cause widespread damage to Scotland's economy that would be felt in our local communities.

However, it is my firm belief that the Scottish Government is more than up to the challenge of protecting Scotland's interests. We will do what it takes to ensure that in Scotland "Remain means Remain".

As I mentioned last month, The National Survey is still underway. If you haven't done so yet, we'd really appreciate hearing your views on the best way forward for Scotland [here](#).

Yours for Scotland,

Sign Language Support from [contactScotland-BSL](#)

I recently teamed up with my Westminster colleague [Roger Mullin MP](#) to record a special video aimed at raising awareness of services for deaf and hard-of-hearing BSL users provided by [contactScotland-BSL](#).



The video is completely silent, with all information expressed visually through BSL sign language and subtitles. We filmed the video at the Merchant's House in Kirkcaldy.

Any BSL user with an internet connection and a computer or tablet with web-cam will be able take advantage of this service.

It is important that all constituents feel their local representatives are easy to communicate with. I hope that this video encourages more BSL users to get in touch.

You can watch the full video from Roger and myself online at: https://youtu.be/FMFHGS6p_K4



Ongoing Issues with SJM

As many of you will be aware, I have been approached by a substantial number of constituents over the last few weeks regarding the estate agent **SJM** in Kirkcaldy. There has been a considerable amount of press coverage over this issue, including many public comments from myself.

Tenants and landlords have reported a number of issues, primarily related to rent payments not being passed on and money being unaccounted for. It appears that the company is no longer in operation and are no longer contactable. I have called on those responsible for the recent uncertainty to come clean. It is completely unacceptable that tenants and landlords do not know what has happened to their money.

My office is engaged in ongoing communication with the relevant authorities, who are now investigating the situation in some detail. It is my understanding the matter is being treated very seriously, though naturally it may take a considerable amount of time for the full story to come to light.

If you have been affected by this issue in any way, I would encourage you to contact **Citizens Advice** on 03454 040505. They are able to provide excellent initial advice regarding what steps you may need to take, and have been passing on the relevant information to **Fife Trading Standards**.

Of course, I am always happy to listen to individual cases. While as an MSP I am unable to fully investigate this, I am always happy to represent constituents where I can and liaise on their behalf. Please do not hesitate to get in touch. I hope I am able to offer more information on this ongoing situation soon.

Congratulations to Maggie's Fife

I would like to extend my congratulations to **Maggie's Fife** on their 10th Anniversary, following a recent visit to their **Cancer Caring Centre** with **Roger Mullin MP**. It was an insightful and educational visit.

The vital work done by **Maggie's Fife** for people throughout my constituency is a matter close to my heart. The significance of their remarkable support to people living with cancer and their friends and families cannot be overstated. The 10th Anniversary is an excellent opportunity to reflect on their work.

I have marked the anniversary with a motion to the Scottish Parliament (**S5M-01568**), commending the hard work and dedication of all the staff and volunteers, and wishing Maggie's all the best for the future.





From Left: Visiting the Levenmouth Foodbank with Jenny Gilruth MSP; and at the Kinghorn Beach Clean in September.

AES in Auchtertool

I was very pleased to hear about the proposals for a new energy project from [AES UK & Ireland](#) in Auchtertool, and attended the recent community session in Auchtertool Village Hall. I have met with AES and welcome their proposal to construct and operate a new 50MW energy storage array. This would take the local energy substation to full generation capacity. I hope to discuss the proposals with [Auchtertool Community Council](#) and to help this project move forward.



Fife Council Waste Policy

I strongly condemn the Fife Council Labour administration's shambolic plan to introduce charges at waste management facilities. This will penalise local residents and businesses simply trying to responsibly dispose of waste, and encourage illegal dumping to avoid the charges. I have already noticed an increase of fly-tipping around the constituency. This could seriously damage the local environment and could end up costing the Council more to remove the waste. Frankly, this mess of a policy should be binned.



Update on the Kinghorn Bank Closure

Following a meeting with **Bank of Scotland** on 30th September with Roger Mullin MP and Councillor George Kay, it is now certain that the Kinghorn branch of the bank will close on **Tuesday 1st November**.

I am grateful to **Bank of Scotland** for agreeing to provide training at the branch on October 17th and 24th to help encourage their customers to transition to online digital banking. I hope that this will go some way towards reducing what will doubtlessly be a significant loss to the local community.



In Parliament

It's been great to get back into Parliament following the Summer recess, though few of us could have predicted the drastic challenges we would face following the UK's Brexit vote. I raised the issue directly in the chamber by asking the Minister for Finance, **Derek Mackay MSP**, whether he agreed Scotland's positive economic outlook was being unduly exposed to a threat by being removed from the EU Single Market against our will. He agreed Brexit was a "key risk", citing that the Single Market accounts for 42% of Scotland's international exports (worth £11.6billion).

On a more positive note, I asked the Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy, **Paul Wheelhouse MSP**, about what steps the Scottish Government would take to support investment in energy storage systems, mindful of the proposed AES facility in Auchtertool. He confirmed further support would be considered as part of the new energy strategy. I was immensely pleased with Mr Wheelhouse's subsequent announcement that UCG (Underground Coal Gasification) would be blocked across Scotland, and form no part of the Scottish Government's future energy strategies.



Campaigning against UCG with Mr Frackhead.

Full Surgery Dates in October

Saturday 1st October

St Clair Hall, St Clair Street 9.30am—10.15am
Pathhead Parish Church 10.30am— 11.15am
The Harbourmaster's House 11.30am— 12noon

Monday 3rd October

Chapel Neighbourhood Community Centre
6pm— 6.30pm
Smeaton Community Centre
6.45pm— 7.15pm

Friday 7th October 2016

Linton Lane Community Centre 6pm—7pm

Saturday 8th October

Philip Hall 10am—11am
Polish Club 11.15am—11.45am
Constituency Office, Kirk Wynd 12noon—1pm

Saturday 8th October

Coal town of Wemyss Village Hall 9.30am—10am
East Wemyss Rose & McDuff Hall 10.15am— 10.45am
Methilhill Old People's Recreation Centre 11am— 11.30am
East Fife Indoor Bowling Club 11.45am— 12.15pm
Buckhaven Community Centre 12.30pm—1pm

Monday 24th October 2016

ASDA Kirkcaldy 6pm—7pm

Friday 28th October 2016

Hayfield Community Centre 6pm—6.45pm

Saturday 29th October

The Toll Centre 10am—10.30am
Kinghorn Community Centre 10.55am—11.15am
Auchtertool Village Hall 11.30am—12noon
14th Fife Scout Hall 12.15pm—12.45pm

Monday 31st October 2016

Sainsbury's Kirkcaldy 6pm—7pm

My team and I are always here to help. If you have an issue, please get in touch.



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