

Murdo Fraser MSP

Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Business,
Tourism & Economic Growth



May Newsletter



@murdo_fraser



@MurdoFraserMSP



01738 553990



murdo.fraser.msp@parliament.scot



Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

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The Cass Review

This month my Conservative Colleagues and I spoke on the Cass Review in parliament, and how a new approach must be taken in regard to gender issues among children. I spoke of Sinead Watson. Now 33 years old, 10 years ago Sinead



transitioned to become a man after suffering a series of sexual assaults. She thought this would be the answer to her problems and she underwent Gender Reassignment Treatment. Today she is in permanent pain and bares both the physical and mental scars of that transition. Clinicians who should have realised that what she needed was therapy, encouraged her down the route of gender transition.

The Cass Report, released last month by Dr Hillary Cass, is a welcomed and thorough analysis of how young people should be treated regarding gender issues. The review puts scientific research at the forefront of gender issues among children and confirms we must rethink our approach to such issues. This is a matter that I have spoken on many times in the past and I will always be an advocate for protecting young people and in particular, woman and



girls. This is something I have been shamed for by the previous First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. See above for my speech in parliament and to the left if you would like to read the review!

25 Years of Holyrood: A Review

An article from the Courier this month detailing my proposals for a renewed Scottish Parliament. Have a read

Proposals for wide Holyrood reforms

BY LUCINDA CAMERON

Reforms to Holyrood including a review of the number of elected MSPs and ministers appointed have been proposed by a thinktank.

The report's author, Scottish Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser, said change is "essential" at the Scottish Parliament, which he said is caught in a "complex web of political polarisation and institutional stagnation".

In the paper, published by non-partisan thinktank Reform Scotland, Mr Fraser said there is an imbalance between the legislative and executive branches of power in Scotland and the quality of law-making "leaves much to be desired".

The report makes several recommendations, including reviewing the number of MSPs, currently 129, with the review considering the fact that the Scottish Parliament has more powers than it did when established in 1999 and work at committee and

chamber level has increased.

It also suggests the number of ministers should be regularly reviewed in proportion to the number of MSPs, with a view to introducing a cap if the number of ministers is above what the parliament deems to be acceptable or necessary.

Mr Fraser said: "The Scottish Parliament was once seen as a beacon of democracy but now finds itself in a complex web of political polarisation and institutional stagnation."

"Despite the various achievements throughout the Scottish Parliament's first quarter of a century, it now stands at a crossroads, grappling with a crisis of confidence and effectiveness."

"Reform is not only desirable but essential if the institution wants to continue its promise to serve the people."

"The ambition to create a more European-style

legislature which would encourage collaborative working and build consensus has not been fulfilled. Instead, Holyrood now mirrors the confrontational dynamic at Westminster.

"The influence of party politics within committees has diluted their effectiveness, turning them into arenas for partisan exchanges rather than a place of constructive communication and consensus-building."

"The checks and balances system in the Scottish Parliament has been seen to show multiple flaws, especially in the formation and scrutiny of legislation."

"Reforms are necessary to restore confidence."

Other recommendations include replacing the current three-stage legislative process with a five-stage process to include pre-legislative and post-legislative scrutiny.

The paper also proposes electing, and paying a

supplement to, committee conveners in order to enhance the status of the role and help separate the committees from the political parties.

It also proposes giving parliament the power to initiate judicial inquiries and to compel ministers and law officers to appear before committees and in the chamber, as well as enhancing the role of the presiding officer.

Titled A Blueprint For A More Effective Scottish Parliament, has been published to mark the 25th anniversary of the first sitting of the parliament in May 1999.

It proposes reforms for implementation at the start of the next Scottish Parliament election in May 2026.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: "The Scottish Government will listen with interest to the debate the 25th anniversary of devolution has generated."

Lucinda Cameron: The Courier 13/05/2024



Visit to Glenalmond Estate

This month I had had the privilege, alongside my colleague Stephen Kerr MSP, of visiting Glenalmond Estate which is owned by Miles Montgomery. Miles chairs Wildlife Estates Scotland and walked us through the various new approaches he and fellow landowners have been taking to modern land management.



Miles showed us that land management can be evolved through a holistic approach, creating opportunities for all with land managers working together to improve their approaches. From our visit we could see these practices are working. Miles' moorlands, grasslands, pastures, hills, and forests (many of which he has planted himself) were alive with numerous species of birds such as golden eagles, geese, northern lapwings, skylarks, grouse as well as deer, hare and many other species of insects and animals.



There were many takeaways from our visit, and it became apparent that the Scottish Government needs to renew its approach to land estates in Scotland. Critically, for example, that the creation of National Parks is not the only option in creating biodiverse spaces. (see next page)

PKC Must widen the National Park Consultation

I agree with the concerns raised by the Tayside and Central Scotland Moorland Group and feel Perth and Kinross Council need to widen its consultation process with local residents and more land managers. As the Moorland Group point out, the principal question in the consultation asked, 'To what extent do you agree with your community being in a national park in northern Perthshire?' As the Moorland Group state, 116 responses to this question out of the 352 were received from communities located outside the proposed national park. I agree with the Moorland Group who feel that those responses should carry less weight than those from within the proposed boundary. It is also worth noting that 78.1% of those in general disagreement to this question came from land managers.

I agree with the Moorland Group's concern that it is disingenuous of Perth and Kinross Council to claim that overall engagement levels in the consultation process were very high, when only 525 people engaged in total, and this equates to just 0.8% of the proposed area's population. The council need to go back to the drawing board on this consultation process and make sure it is widened in terms of those who are contacted and made aware of the National Park bid.

The Council claim they carried out their eight-week public consultation with residents, land managers and other interested parties across Perth and Kinross to discuss their initial proposals for Tay Forest National Park, but it appears that this consultation did not include land managers such as the Moorland Group, nor did it include many local residents, who I'm sure would wish to comment on this plan.

I am asking Perth and Kinross Council to extend their consultation process to include these interested parties.

Visit to the Stables: Lucinda Russell OBE

I visited the historically award-winning stables of Lucinda Russell OBE this month with the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Horse Racing. As many of you will know, Lucinda has had a very successful career, training horses in the Kinross countryside since 1995. Her yard has trained over 700 winning National Hunt Horses and her husband, Peter Scudamore – now an assistant trainer – rode 1,678 winners in his record-breaking career as a jockey.



Peter and Lucinda were kind enough to give us a tour of the stables and the yard, introducing us to jockeys, the horses and of course, the Corach Rambler, the 2023 Grand National winning horse. Lucinda and Peter have taken the decision to retire this horse, after an incredibly successful career protecting the horse from any potential injuries as it grows older. From all the staff there is a great deal of time, care and compassion put into the horses. It was great to see how National Hunt Racing has evolved and how big the industry has become, attracting investment and bringing employment to rural areas.

Post Office Scandal

I spoke in the Stage 1 Debate on the Post Office Horizon Scandal this month. I am glad this grave miscarriage of justice is finally being addressed in Scotland. This scandal saw hundreds of sub-postmasters across the UK unfairly accused of theft and fraud due to the faulty Horizon IT System. This has had a serious emotional and financial impact on the victims with some going to prison and tragically some even took their own lives.

This all stemmed from serious issues with the Horizon Software, which, shockingly, was well known about at the top of the Post Office hierarchy.

Fortunately, the UK Government has now implemented legislation, requiring all those convicted to be exonerated, as well as providing compensation packages for those effected. This did not come without some political football by the SNP, as former leader Humzah Yousaf declared his rage at the legislation not being extended to Scotland, despite the decision to prosecute being entirely up to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal here.

However, of course one can only assume that had, the UK Government intervened with issues of Scottish Justice, there would have been that same faux outrage. This has been yet another example of the SNP stirring grievance on a matter that has devastated people's lives. Watch my speech in parliament on the scandal



UK General Election Called

So, the Prime Minister (PM) has called a General Election (GE) for the 4th of July. It goes without saying that the past few years have been tough for the country. However, I believe the PM is right to now go to the polls. With inflation rapidly coming down and growth creeping back up only the Conservatives can continue this trend and provide solid governance. I cannot say for certain the outcome of this election, however I am reassured to know that we are fielding brilliant candidates, who have been out, tirelessly campaigning and speaking to voters for months now. In Perth and Kinross, you have Luke Graham, and in Angus and Perthshire Glens you have Stephen Kerr, both having served previously as MP's, Stephen and Luke have experience working in Westminster and both will be brilliant local champions. I have joined both Stephen and Luke, knocking on doors and getting your views on local and national issues. It is clear that many are fed up with the SNP and their grievance politics and in both these seats we have made our message clear: that only a vote for the Scottish Conservatives can remove SNP MPs from Westminster.



Continued...

There is still a lot to do. We were fortunate to host Scottish Conservatives Leader, Douglas Ross in Perth to kick off the General Election Campaign from the Royal George Hotel on the banks of the Tay. An introductory speech from Luke really hammered home his passion for the area, and the shared dismay we have all experienced at watching Perth's neglect under this SNP Government. The current MP, Pete Wishart has purely focussed on dividing our country and pushing SNP grievance politics. Luke noted in his speech that having looked at the parliamentary speaking records of the past five years, Wishart has mentioned independence 107 times, the SNP 51 times, and Perth the constituency he represents, just six times. This is not fair and supportive governance. This is neglect and the pursuit of grievance politics. Perth and Scotland deserve an MP who will represent them in Westminster, raising local issues and giving people a voice at the heart of government.

Even now, with a General Election looming, the SNP under John Swinney are choosing to stand by the disgraced former Health Secretary, Michael Matheson after he racked up £11,000 of taxpayer money hot-spotting football games for his children while on holiday. In any other profession, Matheson would have been handed his P45. Not with the SNP. Yet again they have shown they will always put party over the people of Scotland. Its time for change and to send the SNP a message, they cannot take the people of Scotland for granted. If you would like to get involved and play your part in making electoral history, dont hesitate to reach out!: 01738 553990



Right to Recovery Bill

I am delighted to see the Right to Recovery Bill finally be formally introduced to the Scottish Parliament. This bill has been written alongside frontline experts and secured overwhelming support during its consultation stage. At its heart is a legal right enshrined in law for everyone who needs it to access treatment which is the most appropriate for them.

Drug deaths in Scotland are the highest in Europe, while alcohol deaths are at their highest level since 2008. Too many people in Perthshire have lost their lives to drugs or alcohol in recent years and we must stop so many people grieving the loss of loved ones. That is why I have now written to local SNP MSP John Swinney urging him to confirm his backing for the Right to Recovery Bill. We have heard plenty of warm words from SNP politicians about the bill, but now they must actively back it to ensure it becomes law as soon as possible.

For too long addicts have been let down by this SNP Government who time and again have pledged to bring down drug deaths in Scotland. After 17 years in power the numbers have only ever increased. Nicola Sturgeon even made it her “national mission” to curtail drug deaths and help addicts. I hope with this new bill, addicts will get the care and help they need in tackling addiction.



Blairgowrie Community Event Day

I had the pleasure of attending the Blairgowrie Community Event which showcased different local groups working in and for the town. I visited different stalls, including the Community Football Trust, the Rotary Club and the Hill Walking Club to name a few. The event was organised by the Blairgowrie Development Trust. The trust is a credit to the community and their recent project involved the preservation and running of the Public Toilets, a campaign that I and the Perth and Kinross Conservatives backed as the SNP-run council announced its plans to axe these vital public facilities.



Scone Palace Garden Fair

It was brilliant to attend this year's Scone palace Garden Fair thanks to an invite by the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA). David Lydiat from HTA gave us a tour of the stalls where I spoke with representatives from different garden centres who talked me through their business and the scale of the industry in the UK and Scotland, and how methods are changing with for example, the strides being taken to create a peat-free industry. It was also encouraging speaking to representatives from Horatio's Garden, a charity that provides and maintains beautiful hospital gardens for those with spinal injuries. They ensure that those who are no longer able to garden themselves still have that vital connection to nature, that so many of us cherish.