



WELCOME TO MY

December 2023 Newsletter and Happy Christmas!



Hello! I hope this finds you well.

A slightly earlier Newsletter this month as we are coming up to Christmas.

As your constituency MSP it is a real honour to represent you in the Scottish Parliament. I wish you and your loved ones a very Healthy and Happy Christmas and every good wish for 2024.

↓ **In this Newsletter you will find:**

My work in the Constituency, Parliament and Scottish Government updates.



IN THE CONSTITUENCY

Dalmuir Barclay Carol Service

At the start of December, I spent a great evening at Dalmuir Barclay Church's Community Carol Service. It was so good to see the community coming together and joining in with the Christmas cheer. Many thanks again to the Church for the invite, I had a great night and sure those of you who attended did too.



Little Arts of Love Exhibition

I recently visited Clydebank Town Hall for Faifley Art Group's Little Arts of Love exhibition to raise money for Mary's Meals. This is such an amazing cause, with 100% of money from art sold going towards helping feed disadvantaged children across the world. I was really pleased to purchase one of the pieces of artwork to support a great cause and our local artists.



Boundary Change

The proposed Scottish Parliament boundary change, that would see Clydebank split in two, recently went to a Local Inquiry. This is a bizarre and disrespectful move and so I spoke out against it at the Inquiry. Clydebank is a distinct community, and it would be unacceptable to go ahead with these plans to cut it in half. I was pleased to hear so many agree with me on this.



IN THE CONSTITUENCY

Christmas Card Competition

Last week I presented gift certificates and vouchers to the 4 winners of my Christmas Card Competition at Our Holy Redeemer's Primary School. We received so many fantastic entries from across the Constituency, which made it really hard to choose a winner! Well done Emily, Alexa, Brody and Lorenzo and to everyone else who took part.



The Recycle Room

The Recycle Room does such amazing work reducing the amount of items that go to landfill. It was a pleasure to catch up with Nichola to hear more about their work. If you have anything to donate, please consider The Recycle Room. They are short on items like curtains, cushions, lampshades and young men's clothing (men around 20-40 years).

Asda Pop-Up Surgery

It was great to hold my last surgery of the year in Clydebank Asda where I met with constituents and chatted with them about various issues. I hold regular monthly advice surgeries across my constituency and will recommence these after the festive period. You will be able to find out more details nearer the time. However, don't hesitate to get in touch should you require my help.



IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Humanitarian Aid to Palestine

The situation in Gaza is still terrifying and appalling. The Scottish Government has provided very welcome humanitarian aid, but we need a ceasefire now. That is the only way to stop the killing. It is time for Keir Starmer and Rishi Sunak to follow the Scottish Government, stop prevaricating and call for an immediate ceasefire to stop this massacre.



Scotland's Hospices

I spent 14 years as part of the St Margaret of Scotland Hospice Nursing Team before becoming an MSP, so I was pleased to speak in this debate. Every year they touch the lives of approximately 1,800 people. It is not an easy job, but our hospice workers do it with compassion and dedication. My sincere and eternal thanks to the St Margaret's Team, led so ably by Sister Rita.



Ukrainians in Scotland

Since the invasion of Ukraine, Scotland has offered sanctuary to over 26,000 people from Ukraine who have arrived with a Scottish sponsor. It was a pleasure to speak in this debate in support of the Scottish Government's strategy to ensure a positive future for Ukrainian residents here. I was also able to mention the amazing work done by residents, like those from Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels in supporting Ukrainians in the community.



SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT UPDATES

Educational attainment at record high levels - The proportion of pupils in primary in Scotland achieving expected levels of literacy and numeracy have reached record highs for children from both the most and least deprived areas.

Income Tax - The Scottish Government has introduced a new income tax band with estimates that the overall Income Tax will raise £18.8 billion in 2024-25.

EU Recovery Funds - Scotland is missing out on around £1 billion of vital EU recovery funds. The EU's £650bn fund is supporting economic recovery from the pandemic, but Scotland is missing out because of Brexit.

Scottish Students Financial Support - Scottish students will benefit from a £2,400 increase to their annual support package from the start of the 2024-25 academic year. The new special support loan will mean that, per year, the main undergraduate funding package will rise to £11,400 and post-graduate to £13,900.

Rights of the Child Bill - A Bill to provide greater protection of children's rights has been passed by the Scottish Parliament for a second time.

Judicial Factors Bill - A Bill to reform and modernise the law relating to judicial factors has been published.

Reducing domestic homicides and suicides - A new approach aimed at reducing domestic abuse-related homicides and suicides has received overwhelming backing.

Loss and Damage funding - First Minister Humza Yousaf has joined global leaders and outlined Scotland's ambitions to tackle the climate crisis during COP28, as the global sum committed to addressing loss and damage reaches over \$650 million.

