



David Linden MP

Member of Parliament for Glasgow East



NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2021

Linden runs London (again)

On Sunday 3rd October 2021, I laced up my running shoes once again to hit the streets of London and complete the city's marathon. This was my third time running the 26.2 mile course, having previously completed it in 2018 and 2019. Last year's race didn't happen due to coronavirus, and so when I got the chance to sign up for this year's race I jumped at the opportunity. The London Marathon normally takes place in May but was delayed until October this year. Those of us who thought this might mean cooler temperatures were to be disappointed, but the conditions on the day were still great for running.

Each year that I've taken part in the run, I've raised money for a worthwhile local cause; for Glasgow East End Community Carers in 2018 and for Glasgow Girls FC in 2019. This year, I was mindful of the extra pressures put on local organisations which provide emergency food parcels for those in need and decided to raise cash for Glasgow North East Food Bank.

So far, at the time of publishing this newsletter, the fundraiser has brought in almost £2,500 for the food bank, surpassing my original £2,000 target. I've been absolutely blown away by everyone's generosity, especially at such an uncertain time when household bills are rising. I would like to very sincerely thank all those who have donated. I know from my first-hand experience at the food bank just how far this money will stretch and how it will provide meaningful support to a huge number of people.

If you would like to donate before the fundraiser closes, please visit:
<https://davidlinden.scot/marathon>



Universal Credit Crunch

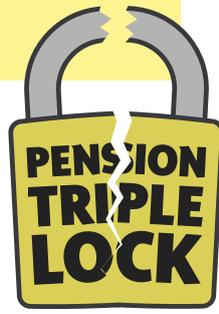
Just as the cost of living is soaring, the Tories have proceeded with their heartless £20-a-week cut to Universal Credit. The uplift, originally introduced at the start of the pandemic as an emergency measure, has proven essential for millions. The original rate of Universal Credit was too low to begin with and the removal of this uplift is a hugely backward move which will plunge families into crisis over the winter. I led the SNP's

campaign to keep the uplift and would like to thank all of my constituents who made their voice heard in rejecting Rishi Sunak's Universal Credit Crunch. As part of that campaign, I took your petition cards straight to the Chancellor's door at Downing Street.

Although the Chancellor has gone ahead with this callous cut, I'll keep campaigning for a fairer social security system for Universal Credit recipients as well as for those on legacy benefits.



Triple Lock broken



On 20th September, the Tories betrayed pensioners and broke yet another one of their manifesto commitments by scrapping the triple lock on pensions this year. The triple lock was a guarantee that State Pensions would rise every year by whichever was the larger amount from average earnings growth, the rate of inflation, or 2.5%. The Tories have effectively made this guarantee meaningless by removing the commitment to raise pensions by average earnings growth for the year ahead.

This year, UK pensioner poverty levels rose to a 15 year high - with 2.1million UK pensioners (18%) now living in poverty after housing costs, an increase of 200,000 on 2018/19. With each day that passes it's becoming clearer that the Tory government has absolutely no intention of looking to protect our older people and secure a real pandemic recovery.

The data shows that pensioners in independent countries of Scotland's size or smaller receive a much higher proportion of the average working wage. Independence is the only way to keep Scotland safe from Tory cuts. We need the full powers of independence to protect and boost the incomes of pensioners and secure a strong recovery.

More pensions scandal

A recent investigation found the UK government underpaid 134,000 pensioners over £1 billion in State Pension, with most pensioners affected likely to be women. The billion pound blunder comes after 3.8 million women born in the 1950s were given little to no notice that their pension age would change, leaving them unable to prepare properly. These mistakes and cruel policies along with the Tory triple-lock manifesto betrayal put beyond doubt the fact that pensioners are being treated atrociously by Westminster. We are now in a situation where the UK offers the least generous pension of any country in north west Europe, and one of the lowest in the developed world and is undercutting pensioners to the tune of £1 billion. It is clear that the real threat to Scottish pensions is not being independent.



Glasgow East Loves Local

As lockdown restrictions have eased, local businesses need our support more than ever. I've been out and about across the East End over the past months promoting the message that Glasgow East Loves Local. Whether it's at the newly-opened Transylvania coffee shop in Tollcross, the brand-new Baillieston establishment Jeanie's, Frankie's Flowers in Budhill, the Calvary Community Cafe, or one of hundreds of other local businesses, there are plenty of places for you to help out the local economy.

You don't have to totally give up on larger chain stores, but a small change in some of our shopping habits can make a big difference in your area.



East End Ears

I've been producing the East End Ears podcast for a while now and regular episodes go live on a weekly basis whenever Parliament is sitting.

The latest episode, number 37, takes a deep dive into what the cut to Universal Credit means and provides plenty of background to the situation.

If you haven't subscribed already, please make sure you do - it's available on all major platforms. Links to those can be found at:

<https://davidlinden.scot/podcast>



Help stop the spread

As winter approaches, we all need to redouble our efforts to stop the spread of coronavirus. Simple steps such as wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces and getting your vaccinations and booster can make a huge difference.

One simple thing you can do to keep those you come into contact with safe is to regularly test yourself using a free lateral flow device. You can get a pack of 7 easily by phoning the National Testing Centre on 0300 303 2713, ordering online, or collecting from your nearest testing centre or participating pharmacy.



Cap needs scrapped

As the SNP's Spokesperson for Work and Pensions, I've been calling for the benefit cap to be scrapped amid the growing Tory-made cost of living crisis. The benefit cap was introduced in 2013 and reduced in 2016. It hasn't changed since, meaning a real terms cut each year for families subject to it.

The UK government's own new figures show that 190,000 people had their benefits capped in May 2021 - an increase of 36,000 in the space of a year. 83% (160,000) capped households contained children, with 62% (120,000) containing at least one child under 5 - an increase of 5,000 since the last quarter's figures. A total of 23,660 households in Scotland have had their benefits capped between the introduction of the cap and May 2021.

The UK already has the worst poverty and inequality levels in North West Europe, exacerbated by Tory cuts, tax hikes and the long-term damage of Brexit hammering low and middle income families. Yet the Tories still keep hammering hundreds of thousands with their cruel benefit cap, which is exacerbating poverty and inequality.

Whilst the Tories at Westminster continue to impose damaging policies like this, the two-child cap and the bedroom tax – which are hitting children and the most vulnerable the hardest - the SNP in government have pledged to double the Scottish Child Payment and will continue to mitigate the bedroom tax.

However, our efforts in tackling child poverty with the Scottish Child Payment are now being undermined by the Tories at Westminster who have cruelly gone ahead with the £20-per-week cut to Universal Credit.

Scotland shouldn't have to mitigate damaging policies from Westminster, nor should its efforts in tackling poverty be dragged backwards. It is clearer than ever that the only way to properly protect Scotland's interests, and build the fair and equal society we all want to see, is for Scotland to become an independent country.



Photo credit: ©UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor

Surgeries return

Over the course of the pandemic, I've had to get creative with my help and advice surgeries. Video chats and meetings under a gazebo in parks around the constituency became real regular features of life for me.

As things start to return to a greater sense of normality, I am once again able to offer face-to-face indoor surgery appointments. My previous surgery schedule isn't quite back to normal, but I will be holding regular events at my constituency office in Shettleston as well as at Cranhill Development Trust. I hope to be able to restart my surgeries at the libraries in Easterhouse, Parkhead and Baillieston as soon as I am able to. I'll update you when they recommence so watch this space for news!

In order to keep everyone safe, I need to operate a booking system for these surgeries. This will prevent you having to wait around in close proximity to others. Please email me on david.linden.mp@parliament.uk or get in touch by telephone on 0141 778 1177 to check availability and book in to a future surgery if you need my help.

Gallowgate regeneration

Recently, I was really glad to attend PEEK's community engagement event on the Gallowgate and hear more about exciting proposals to regenerate the area. As well as various family friendly activities, it was good to see the information stands and plans which display regeneration options for the Whitevale Baths building and the Bellgrove Hotel. Both buildings are of huge historic significance to the East End so I'm keen to hear residents' views about the future of these sites. I've always been clear that regeneration cannot be done to local communities but with local communities, so if you have views on this, please let me know.

PEEK are developing some exciting plans to regenerate Whitevale Baths which would allow them to move back to their original home - keep your eyes peeled for more details.



McVitie's

To say I'm disappointed with the behaviour of the owners of the McVitie's factory is an understatement. Their almost 500-strong workforce at the site at Tollcross have been utterly betrayed by the plans to close the site, particularly having been so crucial to the company's record-breaking sales during the pandemic. These key workers are now being rewarded with redundancy.

Despite the best efforts of the workforce, trade unions, Glasgow City Council, the Scottish Government and local elected members, Pladis have decided to abandon not only their loyal employees, but Scotland too. If you're affected and want to speak to me, please get in touch.



Parkhead pumpkin trail

Normally on a Tuesday, I'd be in Parliament holding Ministers to account and scrutinising legislation. However, with Parliament in recess for much of October, I was grateful to be invited along to Whiterose Community Hall on a Tuesday afternoon to take part in their pumpkin trail. Lisa Adair and the team at Whiterose have done an outstanding job to ensure that a family-friendly, low cost pumpkin trail could be held in our community.

Commercial events like this can be incredibly expensive for families, so hats off to the staff and volunteers at Whiterose for ensuring we can all enjoy the season! The Whiterose Hall are always on the look out for more volunteers, so if you're interested in getting involved, please contact Lisa at the Hall on 0141 556 6222.

