



David Linden MP

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NEWSLETTER

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Scotland stands in solidarity with Ukraine

The utter horror currently unfolding in Ukraine is something many of us could never have imagined happening in 21st century Europe. By invading a sovereign country, Russia is effectively tearing up the Minsk agreements and has violated international law.

This marks a dark day for the people of Ukraine, as they face yet another assault on their sovereignty and an attack on their territorial integrity. We must be clear in our unwavering support for Ukraine and stand strong against the tyranny of Putin's brutal regime.

I welcome the sanctions that have already been imposed on Russia but we can do so much more without engaging militarily. This has to include measures such as visa bans, asset freezes and action against Russian disinformation networks here in the UK, including the disgraceful Russia Today TV station.

There must also be clear actions to address the

impending humanitarian crisis, with estimates that 5 million people could be displaced as a result of the conflict. The Home Office has to go much further than it has so far to enable Ukrainians to seek refuge here.

I have stood alongside my SNP colleagues who have urged the British Government to bring forward a serious humanitarian response plan - which must include safe routes for those fleeing persecution; and an end to the Borders Bill which would see those seeking asylum here criminalised and marginalised.

The UK Government must also make it clear that we are willing and prepared to take Ukrainian refugees here as part of the Global Resettlement Scheme if that is advised by UNHCR and requested by our European allies.

We must be united in the face of Putin's aggression and the solidarity for Ukraine must and cannot waiver.



Surgeries return

With restrictions loosening and things returning to the greatest sense of normality we've seen in almost two years, I've appreciated having the opportunity to recommence my local face-to-face help and advice surgeries. Over the past few weeks, they've been in high demand and every single appointment has been taken.

If you or anyone you know living in Glasgow East needs my help, get in touch with my office by phoning 0141 778 1177 to arrange an appointment.

Details of upcoming surgeries are available at: davidlinden.scot/events/surgeries



Choosing fairness

I'm proud to support Fairtrade Fortnight this year. Farmers and workers in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Honduras, who have done the least to contribute to climate change, are now being hit hardest by its effects. Fairtrade plays a valuable role in supporting farmers to respond and protect their crops from climate threats like drought, floods and rising temperatures. When you can, please choose fairness by choosing Fairtrade products.



World Book Day

I visited St Michael's Primary in Parkhead on 3rd March to celebrate the 25th anniversary World Book Day and to donate some books.

As ever, the kids there had made an extra-special effort to dress up as their favourite literary characters.

Each year, World Book Day creates bespoke £1 books for children and young adults across the UK and Ireland, to promote the power of imagination and the importance of reading. Through World Book Day, every child in Glasgow East will be given a £1 book token, which they can take to a bookshop or supermarket to get their free World Book Day book.

World Book Day has been changing children's lives by encouraging a love of books and reading for a quarter of a century. Reading for pleasure makes an enormous impact on a child's future—whether that's their educational success, well-being or mental health.

World Book Day wants to see more children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the life-long habit of reading for pleasure that will improve their life chances.

I am delighted to celebrate my own love of reading through the World Book Day campaign and am very pleased to have been able to share that with pupils at St Michael's this year.



Glasgow United

I'm very proud to be sponsoring Glasgow United Football Club with a pitch-side advert board at their Greenfield home this season.

Previously known as Shettleston Juniors, the recent rebrand has seen the team reach a new audience of supporters from right across the city and marks a new chapter in the club's rich 120 year history. Here's to the continued growth and success of Glasgow United!



Teal heroes

MPs were recently given the chance to dress as 'teal heroes' to raise awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer at an event organised for Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in March.

Symptoms of ovarian cancer are frequent (they usually happen more than 12 times a month) and persistent, and include increased abdominal size or persistent bloating, difficulty eating or feeling full, pelvic or abdominal pain, needing to wee more urgently or more often, unexpected weight loss, change in bowel habits, and extreme MP fatigue.



LGBT history month

It is always a pleasure to visit my old school, Bannerman High in Garrowhill, but particularly so to mark Purple Friday with them.

Named after the purple stripe in the Rainbow Flag which represents spirit, Purple Friday is an annual day organised by LGBT Youth Scotland to raise awareness and funds which will support young LGBTI people across Glasgow East and the rest of Scotland.

Taking place on the last Friday of LGBT history month in February, Purple Friday has become a major event for schools and youth groups right across the country. It celebrates the spirit of the LGBTI community and harnesses the support of their allies.



I'm very grateful to the school's LGBTQIA+ group for taking time out to meet with me and to discuss not only the work they're doing to promote equality, but to teach me a bit more about how I can be a better ally to them as their local elected representative.

It is really refreshing to see so much support for the group and the LGBTI community right across the school. Every teacher and member of staff seems to be doing an outstanding job in promoting values of tolerance, equality and wellbeing.

I'm looking forward to visiting the group again soon to hear more about the work they're doing. These young activists are truly commendable in their efforts to make their school a welcome and inclusive environment for all.

Work & Pensions spokesperson update



New sanctions regime stings

The DWP has launched Way to Work, an initiative that the Secretary of State says will get half a million people into work. In reality, the scheme represents the most cruel sanctions push yet. Jobseekers will have just four weeks instead of three months to find a job in a suitable field before they are expected to take any job or face being cut off from their social security payments. What makes this new policy particularly farcical is the fact that Universal Credit claimants still need to wait five weeks before their first payment meaning that a jobseeker could now be sanctioned before they've even had any money.

I've been leading the challenge to the DWP on this in the House of Commons, with written questions and in the media. Last month, I blasted the British Government for adding to the misery of jobseekers and exposed the levelling up agenda as smoke and mirrors when I forced them to admit that they are also still expecting jobseekers to commute for three hours per shift. That's the equivalent of someone in Dundee being forced to travel to and from Glasgow every day or face losing financial support.

Benefit cap must be scrapped

I recently secured a debate calling on the DWP to end the benefit cap, which disproportionately impacts lone parent families – the majority of whom are women – as well as larger families, and ethnic minority families.

Based on the latest DWP figures, as of August 2021, 180,000 households have had their benefit capped, including over 6,400 households in Scotland – receiving on average £54 per week less in support than they would without the cap.

Policies like the benefit cap, cruel DWP sanctions, and backwards cuts to Universal Credit are directly contributing to the Tory cost-of-living crisis and exacerbating the concerns hard-working households already have.

UK lagging behind on support for workers

I've called for sick pay to be increased immediately after a damning report from the Institute for Public Policy Research has revealed many older workers, ethnic minorities, and poorer people are likely to receive no sick pay at all.

The UK is cited as having one of the lowest sick pay rates in all of Europe and the developed world, with employees entitled to just £96.35 a week, equivalent to around 20% of the UK average wage.

Many workers have been placed in an impossible position throughout the pandemic when asked to self-isolate. The Tories continually refuse to learn the important lessons from the pandemic, underlining the need for Scottish independence to build a fairer social security safety net.

