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November 2018 newsletter

October was another very busy month for me - so much so that I've not got enough room in this newsletter to fit it all in! Never fear though, if you want more insight into what I've been up to there's plenty more content on my Facebook page, over on Twitter, and at my website.

And remember, if you want to be kept up to date with my work, you can sign up online to receive this newsletter in your email inbox every month at davidlinden.scot/newsletter



Payday lending out of control

My email inbox has been full recently with correspondence from constituents about the scourge of payday lending. The subject has been back in the spotlight following a recent BBC piece which told the story of Danny Cheetham, whose initial £100 loan spiralled to an eye-watering debt of £19,000.

I've subsequently raised the issue in the House of Commons, calling on the Economic Secretary to the Treasury to take action over the role of the Financial Conduct Authority, which appears to be asleep at the wheel and not enforcing their own rules on affordability that might have saved Danny and millions of others from becoming trapped by debt.

Measures announced in the Budget to tackle payday lending simply won't go far enough if the organisation responsible for policing the industry is toothlessly unwilling to take action.



Moving the East end forward

Last month, I visited Young Movers (YoMo) at their Easterhouse base with the Scottish Government's Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, Jamie Hepburn MSP. YoMo do an incredible amount of work not only in the East end but across the city to empower young people to shape their future by shaping their community. The importance of the work being carried out cannot be underestimated.

We were absolutely blown away by some of the testimony of the young people whose lives have been very profoundly - and very positively - changed by this incredible charity.

There's some very inspiring work going on around LGBTI inclusion too. It was fantastic to hear about the effort that's gone into gaining their Silver LGBT charter with LGBT Youth Scotland, and I was delighted to support this by signing the pledge!



Credit where it's due

Last month I paid a visit to Shettleston and Tollcross Credit Union to learn more about the work that's going on at this thriving wee local organisation. At a time when big banks are abandoning communities, it's refreshing to see this treasured institution, with its roots so firmly embedded in the community, refusing to budge from its founding principles of serving local people. If you're not a member of a credit union, it's something you really should consider. It's a great way to save and borrow, and importantly a fantastic way to teach kids about money. If you fancy giving a bit more, why not consider volunteering some of your time to your local union?

Universal Credit reform overdue

To say it's been a bad month for the Department for Work and Pensions would be an understatement. Very serious ineptitude from the Department means that over £1.5bn will be paid to ESA recipients to correct underpayments. Esther McVey, the DWP Secretary, has also been forced to admit that Universal Credit will leave millions of families - including those at the mercy of low-paid and insecure work - worse off to the tune of around £200 every month. The Secretary needs to do the right thing, listen to the people who signed my Universal Credit petition, and halt the roll-out so that the serious problems with the benefit can be fixed.



Supermarket surgeries continue

Last month I visited Morrisons in Baillieston for the latest stop in my roving tour of help and advice surgeries being held in supermarkets throughout the East end. I was bowled over at the response, and took back a pile of new cases I've taken on for folk, tackling problems ranging from asylum, road safety, and sports provision, to traffic management, and childcare vouchers. My next Supermarket Surgery takes place later this month at Morrisons in Easterhouse. If you'd like to attend, there's no need to make an appointment - just pop along on Saturday 24th November between 9:30am and 11am.



Brand new website

Last month saw the launch of my brand new website, which has been rebuilt from the ground up to provide a faster, more user-friendly experience. Among the new features are detailed surgery listings and an on-site postcode checker so that visitors can check if I'm their local MP. There's even a map that visualises where my upcoming surgeries are being held and local news. Best of all though is a custom-made updates section to allow me to share more of my work with my constituents.

All this is only phase one, and there's more development and content planned for the coming months. I'd love to hear your feedback too. Is there anything you'd like to see on the site? Contact me at davidlinden.scot to let me know.

Budget update



It was billed as a Budget to burst austerity, but it turned out to be a burst bubble. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer showed up at the despatch box with his infamous red box, expectations were high. It didn't take long for them to be deflated. After a decade, Tory austerity is far from over, with Scotland's 2019/20 resource block grant down £2bn compared to 2010/11.

I'll start with the good news - a freeze on duty for Scotch Whisky. This is something I've been lobbying the Chancellor about for months now, and a measure that will help protect thousands of Scottish jobs including those at Dewars and Beam Suntory on London Road. The industry needs continued support though. With £3 in every £4 spent on an average-priced bottle of Scotch Whisky being tax, the Chancellor must not neglect it.

Now the not-so-good news... Another issue I've been campaigning hard about is Fixed Odds Betting Terminals. These machines - dubbed the crack cocaine of gambling - are causing misery in communities across the East end and beyond. Myself and many other campaigners won a concession from the Government to reduce the maximum stake from £100 to £2 - a change that was meant to take effect in April 2019. The Chancellor has bowed to pressure from the gambling lobby and put it back until October 2019. Make no mistake, this is a significant change that will prolong agony and heartache for families.

You'll also be aware of my long-running campaign to stop discriminatory minimum wage banding for under-25s and apprentices which currently sees them earning as little as £3.70 per hour. The Chancellor has utterly failed to put this right and after his Budget changes take effect in April next year, that £3.70 goes up to a measly £3.90. This is simply state-sanctioned pay poverty and it must change. I'll keep up the pressure and keep campaigning on this important issue.

The Budget was also a real opportunity for the Chancellor to commit to fixing Universal Credit, but one that he missed. Any extra money he has allocated to the controversial benefit does nothing for people currently struggling and goes nowhere near reversing the billions in social security cuts over previous years.

Brexit update

There's only so long you can kick a can down the road before you run out of road. We're fast approaching crunch time for the Prime Minister with her Brexit negotiations. A deal was supposed to be done in October, yet that has fallen flat. The Prime Minister has - rather self-confidently - announced that she is 95% of the way there. It's a pity that the remaining 5% consists of some stubbornly tricky matters, including the Irish border situation.

The unbelievable ineptitude of the UK Government over its handling of the Brexit negotiations with the EU has left us hurtling towards a "blind Brexit", which would mean Scotland and the UK would leave the EU with no certainty and without any clarity on the detail of any future relationship with the European Union.



The very serious point here is that this scenario throws so much into disarray. On a near daily basis I now have constituents emailing me who are either EU citizens or married to one, with their concerns and confusion over where they stand after Brexit and what hoops they will be expected to jump through for settled status. Business owners across the East end who trade with the EU are genuinely very worried that they could end up going under. The Scottish Government has no other option than to stockpile medicines so that it is prepared for the very worst that the Tories might inflict upon us. This is an unmitigated mess, and we will soon know just how bad it will be. It's time for the Prime Minister to admit defeat and extend the Article 50 process to allow disaster to be averted.

Warm welcome for new Tollcross homes

It was a pleasure to welcome the Scottish Government's Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart MSP, to the East End to formally open the new Headquarters of Tollcross Housing Association. Whilst visiting the Association, both myself and Kevin were also able to see first-hand some of the newly built homes on Dunira Street, Tollcross.

Housing remains the single biggest issue here in Glasgow East. After decades of underinvestment in the housing stock by Labour and Conservative Governments - coupled with Margaret Thatcher's disastrous Right to Buy policy - it's only now that we're finally seeing significant efforts to tackle the social housing crisis and stem the tide. The SNP Scottish Government has set an ambitious target for local authorities and housing associations to build 50,000 affordable homes by the end of this Parliament in 2021 and I'm absolutely delighted to see Tollcross Housing Association playing their small part towards achieving this. Tollcross isn't the only Association building in the East End and I'm looking forward to many more groundbreakings and home unveilings in the near future.



Working for you in every community across the East end of Glasgow

I run a number of regular surgeries throughout the East-end of Glasgow. All of these operate on a first-come first-serve basis and there is no need to make an appointment.

If you need help or advice, pop along to see me. If none of these times are suitable, please get in touch by email or phone.

Easterhouse surgery

The Bridge, 1000 Westerhouse Rd, Glasgow, G34 9JW
Third Friday of every month at 10am

Cranhill surgery

Cranhill Development Trust,
109 Bellrock Street, Glasgow, G33 3HE
First Friday of every month at 10am

Parkhead surgery

Parkhead Library, 64 Tollcross Road,
Glasgow, G31 4XA
Second Friday of every month at 10am

Constituency office

Academy House, 1346 Shettleston Road, G32 9AT
If you require an appointment to see me at my constituency office, please phone 0141 778 1177 or email david.linden.mp@parliament.uk in advance

Transport links

- 🚌 Services 2, 46, 60, 60A, 61, 310, 364, N2, N60 all have stops within walking distance
- 🚆 Shettleston Rail Station is a five minute walk

Baillieston surgery

Baillieston Library, 141 Main Street, Glasgow, G69 6AA
Fourth Friday of every month at 10am

