

Out and About



Giving traditional "Safe oot, safe in" at the Currie Riding of the Marches



Met with Joseline Sabanda, Projects Manager for Windrush Scotland



Visited Royal College of Surgeons to see state-of-the-art robotic technology



Visited works to repair roofs and rendering in Wester Hailes/Murrayburn



Met with representatives of WASPI Scotland to support their campaign



Attended events celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Union Canal



Attended the annual Balerno Gala Day held at Malleny Park



Met EU volunteers at Tiphereth, a charity based in the Pentland Hills



Met with the RSPB in Balerno to discuss preservation of swifts



Annual Report 2022/2023

Pentland Hills PARC Launch

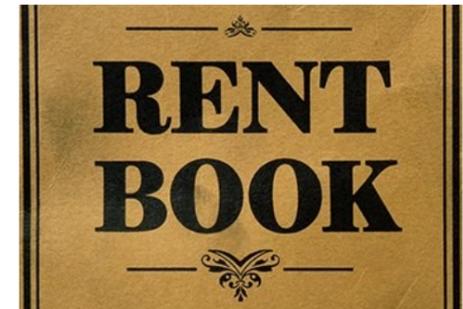


Gordon delivered the opening speech at the launch of the Pentland Hills Partnership Against Rural Crime and water safety event at Harlaw Reservoir; the 15th partnership to be established across Scotland. The initiative supported by Pentlands Joint Committee, Police Scotland, park rangers, Scottish Water, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, SSPCA, Coastguard, SEPA, Forestry and Land Scotland, landowners, and farmers, aims to support those living and working in our rural communities with a focus on crime prevention, intelligence, enforcement and providing reassurance.

Gordon commented, "With access to our countryside comes a responsibility to ensure we treat it with respect. Most visitors to the area around the Pentland Hills make use of the countryside in a responsible manner as they realise it is a working environment. However, once again it is a minority of individuals who abuse the access code guidance. Our agencies, particularly the Park Rangers and local policing teams, work hard to protect this natural environment, preventing anti-social behaviour and educating visitors on the dangers of the reservoirs. I believe that we all have our part to play in preserving it by following the regulations to ensure everyone can enjoy it."

For more information go to www.pentlandhills.org/safety or www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot.

Rent Freeze for Edinburgh Tenants



Tenants in Edinburgh are to benefit from a rent freeze and moratorium on evictions to help people through the cost of living crisis as part of the centrepiece of the 2022-23 Programme for Government.

Gordon noted, "The programme outlines emergency legislation that will freeze rents until at least 31 March 2023. £3 billion has also been allocated for a range of measures that will help mitigate the crisis.

"In addition, the Scottish Child Payment will increase to £25/week per eligible child from 14 November when it also opens to all under 16s, free primary school meals will roll out across all age groups, the Fuel Insecurity Fund will double to £20 million, and rail fares will be frozen until March 2023 — all measures that will go some way in supporting people across Edinburgh Pentlands."

Need to contact your Constituency MSP?

Email gordon.macdonald.msp@parliament.scot

Telephone 0131 443 0595

Letter 9 Kingsknowe Park, Edinburgh, EH14 2JQ

Web form www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info

Home visit Available for those who cannot travel

Or on social media: -

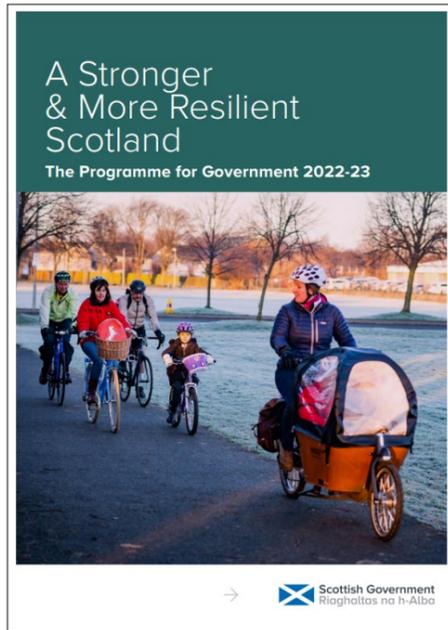
 @GMacdonaldMSP  gordonmacdonaldsnmpsp

MSP Advice Surgeries NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY

- Wester Hailes Library**
1st Friday of month, 10am
- Carrickvale Community Centre**
2nd Friday of month, 10am
- Currie Library**
3rd Friday of month, 10am
- Oxgangs Library**
4th Friday of month, 10am
- Ratho Community Centre**
5th Friday of month, 10am

NO SURGERIES DURING PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS

Cost of Living Crisis Programme for Government



First Minister Nicola Sturgeon set out a raft of actions in the annual Programme for Government designed to help people through the cost of living crisis.

The package will include an increase in the Scottish Child Payment to £25 per eligible child per week from 14 November, with the ground-breaking anti-poverty benefit also opening to applications for all eligible under-16s.

Gordon commented, “The Scottish Child Payment is unique to Scotland and is the most ambitious child poverty reduction measure in the UK. For eligible families in Edinburgh, this payment will help mitigate the growing cost of living crisis. The payment was doubled to £20 per week per child in April and the further increase to £25 from November represents a 150% rise in less than eight months.

“Last year, 7,555 eligible children across Edinburgh benefited from the scheme, and no doubt a similar number will do so this year. Those families who currently receive the payment will have it automatically increased to £25 per week. All new eligible under 16s will also benefit from the £25 rate, with all payments backdated to the date their application is received.”

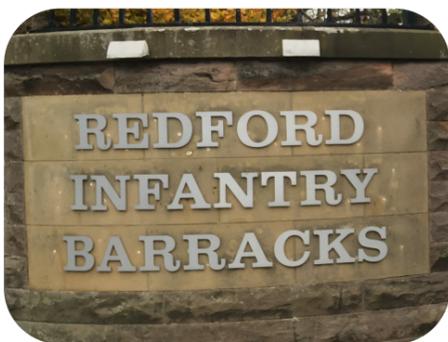


Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2022

In support of Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2022, Gordon visited Baberton Golf Club. Scottish Apprenticeships are backed by the Scottish Government and enable businesses to adapt, sustain, and strengthen their business. The combination of commitment from employers with the backing of the Scottish Government ensure apprenticeships work for everyone, making a significant contribution to Scotland’s recovery and productivity growth.

Commenting on his visit Gordon said “It was a pleasure to meet with Keith Nicholson (General Manager), Brian Toall (Course Manager), and the apprentices. I had a really interesting morning seeing first hand the work carried out by the greenkeepers in providing and maintaining a first class golf course for their members.

“Scottish Apprenticeship Week highlights the vital role apprenticeships play in supporting people, employers and the economy. I know that employers recognise the benefits apprenticeships bring to their business and ensure that they can maintain skill levels within their businesses.”



Reprieve for Redford Barracks

The Ministry of Defence announced that, following a re-assessment of defence needs, the closure and sale of Redford Cavalry Barracks and Redford Infantry Barracks will both be delayed by four years from 2025 to 2029.

Gordon noted, “Unfortunately, the MoD have stated that they are still committed to the disposal of these sites. This is prime development land in the heart of Edinburgh and undoubtedly worth a vast amount of money. This reprieve for four years gives us an opportunity to ensure that any disposal is in the best interests of the people of Edinburgh.

“When they are disposed of, we will have to address that the barracks are used as rehearsal space and accommodation for the Tattoo and alternative arrangements will need to be found.”

School Buildings



As part of the Scottish Government’s £1 billion commitment to invest in school buildings and refurbishments, construction will start on a new Currie High. The new school will come with a swimming pool, an already completed 3G football pitch, and will be built to Passivhaus standards to reduce energy consumption by over 60%. Edinburgh Council are also currently refurbishing Balerno High School and the Wester Hailes High School.

Gordon commented, “This shows the commitment of the Scottish Government to invest in our schools estate. Last year, 90% of schools in Scotland were surveyed to be in good or satisfactory condition, up from 61% in 2007.”



Broomhouse Memorial Garden

Gordon was delighted to attend the opening of the Broomhouse Memorial Garden located in the grounds of St David's Church.

Gordon noted, “During the pandemic, many people lost loved ones and were not able to grieve for them in the manner they would have liked. Therefore, I very much welcome this memorial garden that has created a space for quiet contemplation.”

The church gave some of their land for the garden and the local community have been keen supporters of the project, raising 25% of the costs of the garden. The garden is now open as a space for peace and reflection.

Free bus travel for under 22s

All residents in Scotland under the age of 22 will be eligible for free bus travel from 31 January 2022.



Under 22s Free Bus Travel

Almost 60,000 young people aged 5 to 21 across Edinburgh are now benefitting from free access to bus travel with their National Entitlement Card. Previous research from Transport Scotland found that 70% of young people would use public transport more frequently if it was free.

Gordon said, “This is a hugely significant commitment from the Scottish Government that is benefitting thousands of young people across the city. Young people have rightly challenged their politicians to take bold actions to create a sustainable future for them and free bus travel is an example of what can be done to rise to this challenge. Including the over 60s, more than 40% of the Scottish population are now entitled to free bus travel.

“Making bus travel free for under 22’s is not only important to help tackle the climate emergency, but will take pressure off young people’s finances and improve their access to education, leisure, and work. I would encourage those eligible who have not already done so to apply.”

You can apply at: <https://freebus.scot>



Balerno SSPCA

Gordon was pleased to visit the Scottish SPCA Edinburgh & Lothians Animal Rescue & Rehoming Centre in Balerno. Gordon said, “The Centre do a fantastic job of rescuing and rehoming animals from around the city.”

The centre opened its doors in 1930 and was originally set up as a horses rest farm due to concerns about the welfare of working horses. Over the years it evolved to become a facility capable of caring for all sorts of animals and currently has 38 dog kennels, 42 cat units, stabling for 12 horses, and facilities for small mammals, reptiles, fish, and birds.

Donations are always welcome and for more information go to: www.scottishspca.org/our-work/edinburgh-lothians