



Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Pentlands

Gordon Macdonald MSP

May 2023 Newsletter

A Fresh Start For Scotland



In his first major statement to Parliament, the First Minister said three missions, centred on the themes of equality, opportunity, and community, will be central for Scotland.

Furthermore, a “New Deal for Scottish Business” will be sought, with urgent discussion to agree how government can better support businesses and communities using policy levers such as Non-Domestic Rates.

Actions set out by the First Minister to tackle poverty, build a fairer, greener and growing economy, and improve public services by 2026 include:

- An extension of the Deposit Return Scheme launch date to March 2024, from August this year.
- An explicit commitment to support economic growth and to help business and trade to thrive.
- A further £1.3 billion investment for the Scottish Child Payment over the next three years
- Improved cancer outcomes through better prevention, including Rapid Cancer Diagnostic Services.
- Six-month pilot removing peak-time fares from ScotRail services from October.
- Six new vessels to serve Scotland’s ferry network and doubling the electric vehicle charge point network.

Gordon noted, “Humza and his new government have hit the ground running. This is a fresh start for Scotland and there are many new bold policy initiatives here that will improve equality and opportunity for all.”

Scottish Government Takes Action On Housing Shortage In Edinburgh



Gordon has welcomed plans announced by the Scottish Government to allow councils to double the council tax paid on empty and second homes, in a move to address the challenges around housing in Scotland.

There are currently 8,564 empty and second homes in Edinburgh, while an

increasing number of people are left in temporary accommodation and on longer housing waiting lists. The proposals, announced at the Scottish Trades Union Congress, will bring second homes into line with long-term empty homes from next year.

Gordon said, “Given soaring rent and house prices, this bold action from the Scottish Government will undoubtedly help to free up unused homes and take much-needed steps in addressing the housing shortage in Edinburgh. In his debut as First Minister, Humza Yousaf has proved that the SNP Government is the party of action – not just words.”

New Library and Nursery in Ratho



Gordon and Cllr Neil Gardiner visited the site of the new £2.8 million Ratho library and nursery. The new facility is scheduled to open in Autumn 2023.

Gordon noted, “By combining with the nursery, the library will further enhance its role as a vital community space for Ratho.”

Slashing Train Fares For Passengers



Gordon has welcomed news that peak-time rail fares will be scrapped on ScotRail services for six months from October.

This pilot will make travelling more

affordable and accessible. The Scottish Government's commitment to active travel will also see increased investment to develop more places where people can walk, wheel and cycle safely for day-to-day journeys.

Commenting, Gordon said, "The Scottish Government took ScotRail back into public ownership last year and now passengers can benefit directly from significant price cuts to peak rail fares.

"We expanded free bus travel to under 22-year-olds, and are now putting money straight back into people's pockets with reduced rail fares."

Broadway Premier in Oxcgangs Celebrates 40th Anniversary



Gordon lodged a motion in the Scottish Parliament celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Broadway Premier in Oxcgangs.

The motion

congratulated the owners, Dennis and Linda Williams, on the 40th anniversary of the opening of the store, noting that the convenience store has become a pillar of the community over the last four decades.

Gordon commented, "The family-run shop is a much-valued asset to locals, not only serving hot food and household essentials, but also providing a place for the community to come together. During the pandemic, the shop provided free deliveries for people self-isolating, and launched a hardship fund to help locals buy food and pay for gas and electricity."

Damp Housing Debate



In Parliament, Gordon raised the subject of damp housing within the constituency, which has been the number one issue throughout his 12 years in Parliament.

Gordon welcomed the action taken by the council "The Mixed Tenure Improvement Service work began upgrading flats in Wester Hailes in Summer 2021. Feedback from residents indicates that there have been substantial savings in heating costs with at least one resident believing they had saved around 80%."

The £30 million scheme in the Murrayburn, Hailesland and Dumbryden areas is providing roofing work, guttering, drying room facades, installation of external wall and attic insulation, as well as maintenance and decoration of the communal stairwells and closes to 1,300 flats.

Gold for Balerno and Currie High Schools



Currie High School have been awarded the prestigious LGBT Charter at Gold level from LGBT Youth Scotland in recognition of ensuring that Currie

High School goes beyond meeting legislative needs and is as inclusive as it can be for pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

Balerno High School have been awarded Gold by UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting School Award programme in recognition of embedding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child across the whole school community.

Gordon said, "These achievements are a result of the enthusiasm and commitment of the pupils at both schools, a huge well done to them all. I also want to wish S4, S5 and S6 pupils well in their exams."

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Gordon holds open weekly surgeries for constituents every Friday at 10am.

The locations for these can be found at: <https://www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info/surgery>