



Delight at Local Success



I was pleased to hear that 135,000 meals were claimed by constituents in Perth and North Perthshire through the UK Government's 'Eat Out to Help Out' Scheme during the month of August.

More than 8,500 restaurants across Scotland registered for the scheme

including 175 in Perth and North Perthshire.

The figures also don't yet highlight the figures from the last day of the scheme on Monday 31 August, meaning the final total in Perth and North Perthshire will likely be very higher as a result of Chancellor Rishi Sunak's shot in the arm for the hospitality sector.

This scheme has once again shown how the UK Government has stepped up to support Scotland's economy and businesses throughout the Covid-19 crisis.

The 'Eat Out to Help Out Scheme' was a wonderfully innovative idea and one that has proven hugely popular right across Perth and North Perthshire.

This has been a real shot in the arm for the hospitality sector to get them back on their feet following the Covid-19 shutdown and has brought about a real buzz to our many wonderful restaurants, pubs, cafes and other hospitality businesses across the area.

Many jobs that might otherwise have been lost now stand a real chance of being saved as a result of the Chancellor encouraging us to do our bit and I'd like to thank all locals and visitors who supported businesses here in Perth and North Perthshire.

Murdo Calls for Support for Local Authorities



More support should be given to local authorities following the release of statistics which revealed an expected shrinkage in Perth and Kinross's economic growth.

Economic analysis of Scotland's councils, carried out by KPMG, showed that Perth and Kinross have an expected growth of -9.4% for 2020 – more than the average in Scotland, which is -9.1%.

These figures released by KPMG underline the economic damage brought about by the financial impact of Covid-19.

We have seen an unprecedented amount of money provided to Scotland by the UK Government during Covid-19, but the SNP Government need to demonstrate they care for the country's economy by rapidly speeding up financial help to local authority areas such as Perth and Kinross.

The SNP Government need to ensure communities in Perth and Kinross do not miss out in terms of economic recovery following the lockdown and ensure they have a sustainable economy going forward.

Local residents need re-assurance from the SNP Government about economic support, not more plans centred on dividing the country again by focusing on another referendum on independence – this is the last thing the country needs right now during this pandemic.

Murdo ask for Perth council to rethink its plan to pedestrianise part of Perth high street.



I asked Perth and Kinross Council to rethink its plan to pedestrianise part of the city's High Street following objections from traders and the public.

A plethora of shop owners have slammed the new pedestrian area, with one describing it as "shambolic" due to motorists still using the area between Scott Street and South Methven Street.

Due to the pandemic the whole system of local governance was put under the process of delegated powers.

The move to install parklets and street furniture in the city centre took place this summer as part of a £1.1 million scheme to make the area safer as the country gradually came out of lockdown. The scheme recently expanded to include the top section of the High Street.

However, irate business owners reported a drop in takings of as much as 80% and many signed a petition addressed to the council's planning department, asking that the parklets are removed and a consultation process takes place.

I have been contacted by both traders and property owners in the High Street who are really concerned about the changes that the Council have pushed through.

There seems to be little justification for the pedestrianisation, and the kindest thing to say about the 'tattie box' installations is that they are unsightly in an urban setting.

What is really concerning is that these plans were pushed through under emergency powers by the Council with very little input from elected Councillors or consultation with local residents and businesses.

The Council should scrap these plans, get back to the drawing board, and work with traders and residents to produce a new scheme which should be subject to appropriate democratic scrutiny.

Police Action on A93



It was good to hear that police took a pro-active approach to tackling speeding motorcyclists on the A93.

Local Conservative colleagues, Councillors Bob Brawn and Caroline Shiers and I had asked for action to be taken on the road, following concerns on road safety from local residents due to the excessive speed of motorcycles using the A93 and because some motorcyclists used unsilenced exhausts – causing noise pollution.

There are warning signs on the road to let people know that the A93 is used by many motorcyclists, but we felt the police needed to take a more pro-active approach to address the problem and I'm delighted they did so.

Speeding motorcyclists and those who use unsilenced exhausts has been a problem for some time on the A93 and caused great concern for local residents.

Perth Drain Infrastructure



Residents in Perth will need more assurance from Scottish Water as to whether the city's drain infrastructure is fit for purpose.

The issue came under spotlight following areas of Perth being flooded as a result of a severe thunderstorm which led to me writing to Scottish Water's

Chief Executive to gauge their views on Perth's drainage infrastructure.

Met Office statistics revealed that reveal the total rainfall in Perth during the storm was 86.4mm – with 42mm falling in a single hour.

Perth would normally experience an average rainfall of 65mm of rain for the whole month of August.

Scottish Water's findings acknowledge that the 'significant' storm 'overwhelmed' Perth's drainage system and say that the company recently carried out an Integrated Catchment Study in collaboration with Perth and Kinross Council, which found areas of Perth's sewer system were performing at 'less than the desired level.'

Scottish Water say these areas have the greatest risk of flooding from the sewer and from surface water flows. The company told me they have 'active' projects underway to improve Perth's drain infrastructure.

These projects serve a large number of homes and streets in Perth and Scottish Water has underlined how significant investment in large-scale engineering works will be required to reduce the kind of flooding that hit areas like Perth's North and South Inch on the night of the thunderstorm."

Despite Scottish Water looking into Perth's drain infrastructure local residents will rightly demand more assurance from them that the city will not see a repeat of the recent flooding.

The Growing Backlogs of Court Cases



The number of backlogged legal cases due to be heard at Perth Sheriff Court is a cause of concern.

The latest figures released from the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service showed that 22,437 trials are still waiting to be called in court across the country - up from 18,355 in 2019/20.

Of these, there are 457 trials to be heard at Perth Sheriff Court.

While courts were forced to shut down due to Covid-19, 80% of the delays had already occurred.

Only last month, Eric McQueen, Chief Executive of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service warned that the backlog in courts could take a decade to clear.

These figures are shocking and while the issue of backlogs was building up before the pandemic, the SNP Government need to take urgent action and think of innovative ways to clear the court trial backlog.

The figures show that there are more than 450 victims waiting to have a trial heard at Perth Sheriff Court and that is completely unacceptable. Far too many victims are having to wait far too long to have their day in court causing many of them additional pain and trauma.

This is a situation that has been allowed to get out of hand by the SNP Government – it's high time they addressed this problem.

Dunfermline jobs secured



A £317 million Ministry of Defence (MOD) contract to fit Typhoon aircraft with a radar system secured 100 jobs at the BAE Systems plant in Dunfermline.

The employees in Dunfermline will work on the contract, which has been awarded to BAE and its contract partner company Leonardo.

This is great news for Dunfermline, and obviously great news for the BAE Systems plant there. It will provide a major economic boost to the West Fife area and comes at a time when there are concerns over jobs elsewhere.

The lion's share of this contract has gone to Scottish firms. Figures published earlier this year showed MOD procurement spending in Scotland has risen to £1.76 billion and this contract once again demonstrates that defence not only plays a crucial part in the security of the UK but also contributes to Scotland's economy through high-skilled employment and investment.

I have lodged a Motion at the Scottish Parliament congratulating BAE Systems in Dunfermline on being awarded this contract.

The Stone of Destiny



I understand why no decision has been made yet on whether the Stone of Destiny will return to Perth, but I feel it would be helpful to get some certainty.

It is hoped to have the historic Stone brought back to Perth, where it would become the centrepiece of a new visual arts museum being created in the former building of Perth City Hall.

I wrote to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon in her role as one of the Commissioners of the Regalia, back in February to ask when a decision would be made.

Understandably there has been no word on whether the Stone of Destiny will come back to Perth due to the SNP Government dealing with the outbreak of Covid-19.

However, it would be good to get certainty on the issue. Already, we are seeing businesses such as Argos close in Perth City Centre due to the impact of the lockdown and many more are struggling financially.

I understand that businesses and shops are going through very difficult times just now so the promise of the Stone of Destiny coming back to Perth could make a real difference to business confidence locally.

A group of four Scottish students broke into Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day in 1950 and removed the Stone of Destiny from King Edward I's

Coronation Chair.

The Stone was recovered some months later in Arbroath Abbey and then returned to Westminster Abbey. It remained there until 1996, when the then Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, arranged for its transfer to Edinburgh Castle.

The River Tay Jet skiers



I called for jet ski users on the River Tay in Perth to behave in a responsible manner and have vowed to continue to look into what can be done to improve the situation.

Residents who live near the River Tay contacted me to say they were upset at both the noise made by the jet skiers and also with the potential disturbance to wildlife in the area.

I understand the concerns of the residents, both about the noise and also the potential disturbance to wildlife in the area.

I contacted Perth and Kinross Council about the issue, but I do understand their hands are effectively tied about what can be done by current legislation. However, I would ask those who operate the jet skis to behave in a responsible fashion and I will continue to investigate to see what can be done to improve the situation.

Find Out More About Me Here

Murdo's Website



Perth & Conservative Website

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