



■ Perthshire residents back 'Support our High Streets' scheme.

■ SNP slow roll out of broadband programme causes concern.

Murdo Fraser MSP

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Candidate for Perthshire North, Scottish Parliamentary elections 2021

Community response to Covid 19 praised



Murdo Fraser MSP has praised the response from communities across Perthshire to the Covid-19 pandemic. Right across the county, people rallied together to help neighbours, particularly those with health issues and who were shielding. Perth and Kinross Provost Cllr Dennis Melloy wrote to many local groups to thank them directly for their efforts, and these thanks have been echoed by Murdo.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has been a really difficult time for many people", Murdo

commented. "However, it has also brought out the best in many of our local communities. We have seen people rally around and help their neighbours, particularly those who are most in need.

"I have spoken to many individuals involved in local groups who have been helping others. It shows what a strong sense of local community we have here in Perthshire, that people are prepared to assist one another at a time of difficulty for the country."

FRASER: "Support our high streets"

Murdo is asking Perthshire residents to back the Scottish Conservatives' Support our High Streets scheme. The campaign aims to encourage people to support local businesses, as well as proposing a number of policy initiatives to help firms that have been struggling: cuts to business rates, relaxations in planning restrictions, and pop-up park and ride facilities.

Murdo said: "There has been huge support from the UK Government for businesses, but as we move on from the public health emergency we now face a significant economic crisis. We do need to support our local businesses which need increased trade to get back to the levels it was before the pandemic.

"The Scottish Conservatives will continue to stand up for jobs and livelihoods, to help ensure our economy suffers as little as possible over the remaining course of this crisis."



Praise for UK Government business and jobs support



The UK Government's furlough scheme has been praised by Murdo for helping protect thousands of jobs across Perthshire. This highlights the strength of being part of the United Kingdom during a time of unprecedented crisis, and shows that the

British Government has provided invaluable support to industries and businesses throughout Scotland during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Murdo commented: "The UK Government, and Chancellor Rishi Sunak, have given unprecedented amounts of

financial help to Scotland during the pandemic. There has now been an extra £8.2 billion given directly to Scottish Government, and the job retention scheme has

seen another £5 billion spend in Scotland.

"In addition, the British Government has given £1.57 billion towards arts across the UK, £700 million in support for the self-employed, and an additional £224 million for Universal Credit Statutory Sick Pay and Working Tax Credits, whilst loan schemes have lent approximately £1.3 billion to Scottish firms.

"All this shows why being part of the United Kingdom, with the financial strength of the British Government, has been a real difference to protecting businesses and livelihoods in Scotland during this very difficult period."



It's time to tackle dirty camping

Murdo is calling for action to tackle the growing problem of "dirty camping" – individuals camping informally at beauty spots throughout Perth and Kinross, leaving a mess, dumping litter, cutting down trees, lighting fires, and indulging in anti-social behaviour.

Perth and Kinross Council have been working with other agencies, including the local police, to clamp down on this unacceptable behaviour. Murdo

has also welcomed an initiative to allow campervans and motorhomes to park overnight in forest car parks in Perthshire, in a bid to tackle the problem.

"The issue of dirty camping is one that is very real in the local area, particularly around lochsides," he says. "I led a debate in the Scottish Parliament on the issue in September and pressed Scottish Ministers on the need for a national approach to tackle this growing problem."



Murdo with Strathtay councillors Anne Jarvis and Ian James at Clunie Loch, an area particularly affected by 'dirty camping'.

Speeding bikes on the A93

The issue of speeding motorbikes, some using unsilenced exhausts, on the A93 and other local roads, has led to Murdo raising the issue with the local police.

An online meeting was held with the local community, local councillors, and the police, to discuss what more might be done to try and tackle the problem, which is particularly acute in the summer months. Speaking after the meeting,

Murdo said: "I welcome the assurances from the police

concerning the problem of speeding bikers on the A93, and specifically the actions they will take to patrol the road.

"Local residents have rightly been very concerned by the number of speeding bikers in this area, and have had to contend with some of the bikes having unsilenced exhausts, causing a major noise nuisance in and around Glenshee and elsewhere.

"I will continue to work with local representatives and the police to try and ensure that this problem is addressed."



Murdo by the A93 with Blairgowrie & The Glens councillors Caroline Shiers and Bob Brawn

Rural healthcare must be a priority

Murdo Fraser and Highland Ward councillor John Duff are working hard to ensure the return of rural health services are a priority

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen NHS resources diverted to dealing with an unprecedented health crisis. Whilst understandable, this means that huge waiting times have built up across the NHS, and many treatments delayed or cancelled.

Murdo Fraser MSP has been contacted by hundreds of constituents who are concerned at the time they are waiting for vital treatments. He has taken the issue up with the Scottish Government and NHS Tayside.

“There are many people,

particularly the older generation, who rely heavily upon our local health service,” says Murdo.

“Whilst we of course have had to see a focus on Covid 19 over the past months, there are many individuals with



Particularly important here are the health services in rural communities.

other serious conditions who are desperately in need of treatment. We must get the NHS back working for them too.

“Particularly important here are the health services in rural communities. People don’t want to be making long journeys for short appointments

if these can be avoided. We need to make more use of local health facilities in our towns and villages, bringing the NHS closer to people.”



Promoting safe cycling



Murdo and Carse of Gowrie councillor Angus Forbes and Strathmore councillor Colin Stewart promoting safe cycling in Coupar Angus

As a keen cyclist, Murdo is pushing for new initiatives to encourage greater use of bicycles.

The UK Government has announced a number of schemes to promote more bike use, and locally we see Perth and Kinross Council creating new cycle lanes in Perth city. In the country areas, more cycle

routes are being planned.

Murdo commented: “Like many local families, we enjoy cycling, but we want to ensure this is done in a safe manner, and this means having proper off-road cycle tracks.

“I welcome the initiative by Perth and Kinross Council to invest in greater cycle facilities, for example on the Dunkeld Road corridor in Perth, and

provide more bike parking. However, there is much more we need to do.

“Cycling is a safe, healthy and enjoyable form of transport, growing in popularity. It is good to see this being supported by Government and the local Council, and we need to keep expanding the facilities available for local cyclists.”

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Flooding issues in Perth



▶ Murdo Fraser MSP and Cllr Chris Ahern have raised their concerns about the drain infrastructure in Perth. The problem with drains not coping with the volume of water was brought to their attention due to the recent flooding in the city following thunderstorms in August.

Murdo Fraser has now written to Scottish Water asking them to investigate whether the drain infrastructure in Perth is sufficient to cope with the volume of water.

Murdo said: "The problem is that the drains can't cope with the volume of water and then some drains collapse which

contributes to flooding.

"There are fears that the drains are not fit for purpose to deal with the increasingly severe weather patterns which we are encountering these days, and there are also worries that the drains are not properly inspected or maintained.

"Flooding was particularly bad in North Muirton and in the North and South Inch areas of Perth, with residents understandably concerned about the situation."

Concerns about flooding? Contact Murdo on the details on P3.



Concerns over broadband

Broadband continues to be one of the main subjects Murdo receives complaints on from residents, and matters have not been helped by the Scottish Government's flagship R100 project being delayed now by two years.

Commenting, Murdo said: "The R100 (Reaching 100%) programme initially sounded like a very positive move when it was first announced, as its aim

was to deliver superfast broadband to all Scottish premises by 2021. However, its delay is a big disappointment, especially to constituents living in rural areas of Perthshire where broadband speed has been



I will continue to put pressure on SNP Ministers

incredibly slow. "With more people working at home during the Covid-19 pandemic,

broadband speeds have become more and more important. The slow pace of roll-out by the SNP Government of its R100 programme has therefore caused major problems, particularly for businesses and for individuals who are working from home.

"Many residents and businesses rely on good broadband speed – it is an issue that surely must improve in the 21st century. I will continue to put pressure on SNP Ministers to improve matters."

Let's unite to take Scotland forward

Scotland doesn't need another independence referendum - no matter how many times the SNP demands one. We need to end the focus on constitutional division that so dominates Scotland's national life.

That's why it's so wrong for the SNP to be setting out plans for a new independence referendum – including the question and date of the vote – before the end of this parliament.

Instead of opening up old divisions, we need to focus on opening up opportunities and better life chances for all our people.

We need to put all the energies, talents and powers of Scotland into restoring Scotland's

reputation for educational excellence, on supplying the jobs that give our people dignity, and on securing a health service with clean, open hospitals to support our sick.

The Scottish Conservatives say 'No' to another referendum, because Scotland has other - more important - issues that need our attention. And if we act together, the SNP and their referendum plans can be stopped. There are enough of us to do it, but only if we are united.

So if you want to stop the SNP and their renewed threat of a distracting and divisive independence referendum, and instead move Scotland forward together, then only a vote for the Scottish Conservatives can do it.



Leader of the Scottish Conservatives Douglas Ross MP joins Murdo Fraser to support local businesses and jobs