

Gordon Macdonald MSP

Edinburgh Pentlands Constituency Monthly Report — January 2015



Delay in new homes!

Gordon attended the recent meeting of the North Sighthill Residents' Association held at Gate 55.

The meeting was held with the City of Edinburgh Council regeneration team to receive an update on the plans for new homes adjacent to the fire station.

The former residents were decanted from their homes between 2008 and 2011 and many were looking forward to be rehomed in the new development.

However the residents at the meeting were informed that despite a master plan being produced in 2010 the council were having to start again with their plans to reflect the changes in demand for accommodation and parking.

The result is that it is likely to be late 2016 before developers will be on site to begin construction and possibly 2018 before properties will be available to rent or purchase.

Outline planning is in place and funding is available therefore we need the council to deliver these much needed homes ASAP!



Over 100,000 residents benefit from concession travel scheme.

SNP MSP Gordon Macdonald is today welcoming the Scottish Government's continuing investment in concessionary travel – after new research showed that a total of 109,264 people in Edinburgh are benefiting from the scheme.

The research from the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) shows that 97,415 people over the age of 60 and 11,849 disabled people in Edinburgh benefited from the policy.

Last week it was announced that a deal had been struck between Transport Scotland and the bus industry which will see £414m invested over the next two years to ensure the scheme continues to provide free bus travels for over 60s, injured service veterans and people with disabilities.

Commenting, Gordon Macdonald MSP said: "The SNP Government's deal to ensure that concessionary bus travel continues in coming years is hugely significant – and this new research shows just how important this investment is to the thousands of older and disabled people in Edinburgh who are benefiting from this scheme.

"Concessionary bus travel gives people who might otherwise be restricted a greater sense of independence and helps them remain in contact with their friends and family. Funding for the scheme has increased every year since its introduction and with the scheme helping older people, disabled people – and now injured armed services veterans too - to make almost 147 million journeys last year, it is vital the scheme continues.

"The Scottish Government's continued investment in this vital lifeline service is excellent news for everyone who benefits from this service – and I am delighted that people in Edinburgh will continue to do so."

Keeping you informed @ www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info



Scottish Grocers Federation holds 1st Scottish Parliament Exhibition



Following the exhibition the Scottish Grocers Federation issued the following statement.

Gordon MacDonald MSP has continued his invaluable support for the independent convenience store sector by sponsoring a highly successful exhibition in the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Grocers Federation (SGF). The Federation is the national trade association for the convenience store sector in Scotland. The exhibition aimed to highlight to MSPs the contribution locally owned stores make to the community and to the local economy. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon was one of the first visitors to the exhibition and said that she was “*determined to work with SGF and retailers*” to look at the issues facing the industry.

Locally owned independent convenience stores are at the heart of our communities. There are 5,500 convenience stores in Scotland, they provide 42,000 jobs and the total value of sales to the national economy is about £3.7 billion. Convenience stores also re-invest significant sums of money into the local economy by using local suppliers, local tradespeople and by providing valuable local jobs. A typical convenience store will re-invest anywhere between £250,000 and £440,000 back into the local economy.

Oxgangs retailer Dennis Williams, who represented SGF at the exhibition said, “*the response to our exhibition from MSPs was overwhelmingly positive; we have been hugely encouraged by the cross party support for local stores. The exhibition would not have happened without Gordon’s support.*”

In August 2014 Gordon MacDonald sponsored the first ever debate in the Scottish Parliament on the convenience store sector and since then SGF has been working closely with him to effectively follow-up on the success of the parliamentary debate.

SGF Chief Executive John Drummond said, “*the exhibition is another big step forward for the convenience store sector in Scotland. With Gordon’s help we have been able to tell MSPs directly about the importance of locally owned stores to our communities and to the economy.*”

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- 5 Surgery: Held every Monday at 6.30pm at various locations throughout the constituency
- 6 Home visits are available for those people who cannot travel.

PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE NO SURGERIES DURING PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS