



September
2018

Gordon Macdonald

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Pentlands

Free Bus Pass Scheme EXTENDED



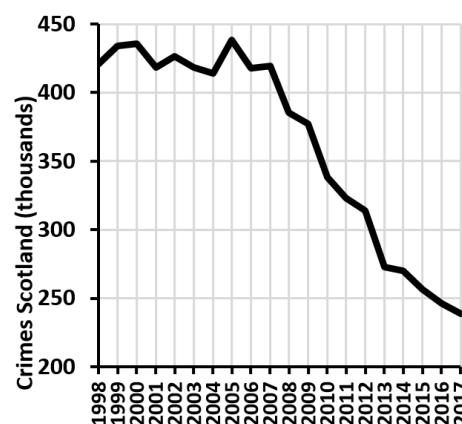
The much-valued concessionary travel scheme supported by the Scottish Government is to be extended.

There shall be no change to the age of eligibility and the Travel Scheme will be extended to companions of eligible disabled children aged under five, which could result in over 3,000 families and children additionally benefitting from the bus pass. Furthermore, options to provide free bus travel for Modern Apprentices are to be considered.

The consultation for this change had nearly three thousand responses from people and organisations all across Scotland. Two-thirds of respondents wanted the eligibility to remain from the age of 60, and a similar number wanted Modern Apprentices to also benefit from free bus travel. An even greater number wanted the provision of companion cards for eligible disabled children aged under five.

Commenting, Gordon said, "The concessionary travel scheme is very highly valued by users and, most importantly, enables independence, accessibility and social inclusivity. That there will be no change to the age of eligibility and that there will be an extension for additional families to the service is extremely welcome. The Scottish Government's commitment to maintaining the scheme and to public transport is clear and I am delighted to hear this news. I would like to thank everyone who responded to the consultation."

Crime Lowest Since 1974!



Last year's figures for recorded crime in Scotland have shown a dramatic fall in crime in Edinburgh.

The annual fall in crime in Scotland was 3%, but in Edinburgh it was a 7% drop in recorded crime.

Commenting, Gordon said, "No level of crime can be considered acceptable; however, these figures show a positive direction of travel.

"We know cities attract more crime than rural areas. Of the four big Scottish cities (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow) it is Edinburgh that has the lowest crime rate."

The Recorded Crime in Scotland Report notes that crime in Scotland is at its lowest since 1974 and there has been a 34% drop in crime in Edinburgh since 2007.

Out and About...

Saughton Park Restoration



Michael Matheson MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, and Gordon visited the restoration of Saughton Park.

There was a wide public consultation to develop the master plan proposals, which includes refurbishing and replanting of the Winter Garden, conservatory, and Sunken Garden; repairing all the historic walls, entrances, and gates; reinstating the bandstand within the Walled Garden; restoring the Exhibition bridge and the Grade II listed Sundial; developing a new plaza in the footprint of the original Saughtonhall House; restoring the stables as a new community venue; and building a new cafe and public toilet facilities including a changing toilet.

Gordon noted, "Saughton Park is a real hidden gem in the south west of Edinburgh. It has suffered from some neglect in recent years, but this £5 million restoration project will massively improve the facility.

"I am especially pleased that there will be improvements to biodiversity across the site."

And the Winner is...?



Gordon recently participated in judging the Champion Beer of Scotland 2018 at the CAMRA Scottish Real Ale Festival held in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange.

Commenting, Gordon said, "With the continued revival of real ale, I was pleased to taste many of the best beers Scotland has to offer.

"It was a difficult task, but the close winner was Swannay Brewery's Orkney IPA.

"The brewing industry is historically strong in Scotland with Heriot Watt even offering an internationally respected BSc in Brewing and Distilling."

Greenbelt Defence Win



Gordon hails the success of community opposition to housing development on Green Belt land. Commenting, "Miller Homes were to build 86 luxury homes on the Greenbelt in Fairmilehead.

"I and over 100 residents submitted written objections and it was thrown out by Planning."

However, Miller Homes appealed to the Scottish Government Reporter where the application was again rejected on the basis that the site is "an important area of open countryside that contributes to the effectiveness of the greenbelt."

Contact Details

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Gordon Macdonald MSP



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Monthly Surgeries — No appointment needed

1st Monday of the month, 6.30pm Wester Hailes Library

2nd Monday of the month, 6.30pm Carrickvale Community Centre

3rd Monday of the month, 6.30pm Currie Library

4th Monday of the month, 6.30pm Oxbgangs Library

5th Monday of the month, 6.30pm Ratho Community Centre

NB: NO SURGERIES DURING PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS

Working for Edinburgh Pentlands