

Gordon Macdonald

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Pentlands

January 2019

Gordon Calls on Parliament to Donate Old Computers



Gordon has called on The Scottish Parliament Corporate Body to partner with the Turing Trust to donate old computers from the Scottish Parliament to schools in Ghana and Malawi. Gordon raised this matter during a Members' Debate highlighting the international work of the Rotary Club of Currie Balerno with the Turing Trust.

For over six years, the Trust, supported by the Rotary Club has shipped over 4,200 second-hand PCs to schools in Ghana and Malawi. However, not all communities are connected to electricity. To address this, the Turing Trust design team comprising four retired professionals, Ian Campbell, Andrew Clark, Jim Douglas, and John Wilson, all members of the Currie Balerno Rotary Club, developed the SolarBerry. The SolarBerry is a solar-powered computer lab using low-power Raspberry Pi computers housed in a repurposed shipping container. The prototype was delivered last year.

Commenting, Gordon said, "The Rotary Club of Currie Balerno are doing incredible work locally and internationally with The Turing Trust. I was pleased to welcome them to the Parliament for the debate. They have supported over 41,000 students in becoming computer literate and over 450 teachers to gain skills in basic computer maintenance.

"The Currie Balerno Rotary Club is showing the global difference that can be created through local actions and I would encourage people to get in touch with the Rotary Club, if you would like to get involved with their brilliant work. I also want to encourage every organisation to consider donating their old computers to the Turing Trust."

Concerns Raised Over Hospital TV Charges



In a recent debate in Parliament, Gordon spoke against hospital television charges.

Health boards were mandated by the previous Labour Government to provide bedside televisions. This left many of them with no alternative but to enter into expensive 15-20 year contracts. In NHS Lothian, the PFI Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh pass these charges onto patients.

Gordon noted in his speech that "£9.90 per day to access bedside television is, in my view, prohibitively expensive." He noted that they only provide 25 channels, whereas Sky can offer hundreds of channels from only £22 a month.

"Thankfully, a number of these contracts are ending this year and NHS Scotland is investigating the feasibility of free wifi including access to video streaming".

Out and About...

MoD Must Help Homeless Veterans



Gordon has called on UK Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson MP, to use surplus army homes to house veterans and their families.

The call was made after an FOI request revealed the shocking number of MoD army homes in Scotland left empty — 1136 this year, up from 690 in 2013.

Gordon stated, “The risk of homelessness is all too common among veterans, some of whom struggle to adapt to civilian life or may suffer from mental illnesses such as PTSD.

“Many of these properties are ‘surplus’ and could be used as temporary housing for veterans on route to a permanent tenancy.”

The Scottish Government has increased actions to tackle homelessness with several aimed at veterans’ homelessness. Over eight years there has been a 39% reduction in overall homeless applications in Scotland.

Gordon stressed, “The Ministry of Defence has a duty of care to help those who have served. It is time to bring this vacant housing into use for the public good.”

Primary School Visits

Gordon visited and spoke to P7 pupils this month at Pentland Primary School and St Mark’s Primary School.

Primary schools in Edinburgh undertake Citizenship & Democracy modules where politicians are often invited to allow the pupils the chance to discuss issues directly with law-makers.

Gordon answered questions on subjects ranging from Brexit to school funding.

After the visit, Gordon said, “It is always a joy for me to engage with school pupils. They are invariably well-informed of goings-on in the wider world and eager not just to know my position on such matters but also to give their opinions too.

“I make a point of trying to visit as many of the schools in my constituency as possible.”

Another Greenbelt Defence Win



A housing development on Green Belt land has been successfully opposed by the community.

Following the decision, Gordon noted, “Clarendon were to build 52 homes on the Green Belt by Glenbrook Road, Balerno; however, I and over 200 residents submitted written objections.

“Clarendon appealed to the Government Reporter who rejected it on the basis that ‘Given the adverse impacts on the rural character and landscape setting of the settlement, I find that the proposal would not be the right development in the right place’”.

Contact Details

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Home visit

Available for those who cannot travel

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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 Oxfgangs Library (Not 24 Dec)

5th Monday of the month, 6.30pm Ratho Com. Centre (Not 31 Dec)

NB: NO SURGERIES DURING PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS

Working for Edinburgh Pentlands