



Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Pentlands

Gordon Macdonald MSP

June 2023 Newsletter

Traditional Building Skills at Parliament



Gordon, having supported the Scottish Traditional Building Forum (STBF) for over 10 years, opened this year's event at the Scottish Parliament with pupils from Wester Hailes High School.

The STBF is a network of local traditional building forums who work together to highlight specific issues relating to traditional buildings, skills and practices.

Gordon noted, "The young people tried their hand at slating, electrics, painting, surveying with drones, and stonemasonry. Hopefully, it will encourage some to become apprentices in the future."

"With the well documented skills gap and aging workforce in Scottish construction, we need to raise the profile of the many and diverse careers in construction to help young people make informed choices about joining the industry and if so, which part or trade they are interested in.

"The first demonstration took place at Edinburgh Castle for Scottish Apprenticeship Week in 2012. This has evolved into the Build Your Future programme. I am pleased to hear that the Edinburgh Council is going to offer Build Your Future to every high school in the city, using the council's Community Benefits on contracts to create the capacity to deliver the in-person activities."

Converge on Business Development



Gordon hosted a reception in the Scottish Parliament for Converge, Scotland's largest company creation programme for staff, students and recent graduates of Scottish Universities and Research Institutes. Converge, based at Heriot Watt University campus functions to help creators and

innovators turn their ideas into commercially viable businesses.

Gordon stated, "Converge are funded by the Scottish Funding Council, Creative Scotland, all 18 of Scotland's universities, and a network of ten professional partners. Their programme is designed to springboard new businesses through intensive training, networking, 1-to-1 support, equity-free cash prizes, and expert advice from industry partners.

Since launching in 2011, Converge has supported the creation of numerous high-growth companies with over 330 companies having been created to date.

Pentland and St Mark's School Visits



Gordon visited Pentland Primary and St Mark's RC Primary schools.

The P7 classes are focusing on democracy covering Scottish politics and the role of an MSP.

Gordon said, "It was great to visit the schools and have a lively discussion with the pupils who were certainly well informed."

MoD Housing in Edinburgh



Gordon recently used the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act to find out the number of Ministry of Defence (MoD) houses in Edinburgh, and was informed

that there are 443 such properties.

Gordon said, “The MoD have a large portfolio of properties with many lying empty for several years!

“Prior to my enquiry, Edinburgh Council purchased 23 former MoD houses and it is hoped that over time a total of 78 properties in the Oxbgangs area will eventually come under council ownership.

“I have been relentless in my calls for the MoD to free up their empty properties and it would provide much needed family homes for those families living in overcrowded accommodation across the city.”

New Crossing on Lanark Road at Kingsknowe Park



An updated report from City of Edinburgh Council indicates that the new pedestrian crossing of Lanark Road at Kingsknowe Park is to be delivered in mid-2023.

Gordon noted, “I have been raising concerns with Edinburgh Council for many years regarding the difficulties for local residents to cross the Lanark Road at this point.

“These concerns were triggered by a number of concerning situations in which I and local residents had witnessed pedestrians trying to cross Lanark Road safely.

“The current road traffic islands are narrow and unsuitable for wheelchairs, children’s buggies, and family groups with small children.”

Gordon Pays Tribute To Fallen Firefighters



Gordon spoke in the debate marking Firefighter Memorial Day and paid tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Gordon said, “In the past 100 years, more than 40 firefighters have died while serving in Scotland.

“In July 2009, firefighter Ewan Williamson died while fighting a blaze at the former Balmoral Bar in the city’s Dalry Road. Much more recently, we saw the tragic death of firefighter Barry Martin while firefighting in the vacant Jenners store on Princes Street in January.

“Across Scotland, our firefighters put themselves in harm’s way—sometimes at the cost of their lives—while they protect the public.”

£9.5 Million To Support Young Musicians



Murrayburn Primary School was the setting for the Scottish Government’s £9.5 million announcement for Scotland’s flagship Youth Music Initiative (YMI) including

£500,000 to expand YMI into other arts.

YMI funding enables schools and other organisations to provide music-making activities for children and young people, which range from after-school drum bands to courses in sound production.

Gordon said, “Music plays a vital role in developing wider skills as well as having a hugely positive impact on confidence and wellbeing. Over 362,000 young people benefited from YMI projects last year — the majority of those in high-deprivation areas. This is very good news for young people both here in Edinburgh Pentlands and the wider city.

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Gordon holds open weekly surgeries for constituents every Friday at 10am.

The locations for these can be found at: <https://www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info/surgery>