



Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Pentlands

Gordon Macdonald MSP

November 2023 Newsletter

Council Tax Freeze

The SNP will freeze Council Tax to support struggling households



Council tax rates will be frozen in the next financial year to support people struggling with the effects of high inflation.

The freeze will benefit every Council Tax-payer in Scotland at a time when rising prices are putting significant strain on household finances. The Scottish Government will fully fund the freeze to ensure councils can maintain services.

Gordon said, "The freeze, which the Scottish Government will be fully funding to ensure councils can continue providing the services on which we all rely, will bring much needed financial relief to those households who are struggling in the face of the cost of living crisis.

"The Scottish Government has increased the resources available to local government in 2023-24 by more than £793 million, a real-terms increase of £376 million or 3%, compared to the 2022-23 Budget figures.

Council tax is already lower in Scotland than elsewhere in the UK, and some 2.5 million households will now benefit from this freeze. The Scottish Government are also working on longer term reforms to the council tax system, which are being considered by the working group on local government funding.

"Operation Crackle" for Bonfire Night and Surrounding Period



Edinburgh Division will once again be implementing their "Operation Crackle" to ensure a graduated and proportionate response to incidents on or around Bonfire Night.

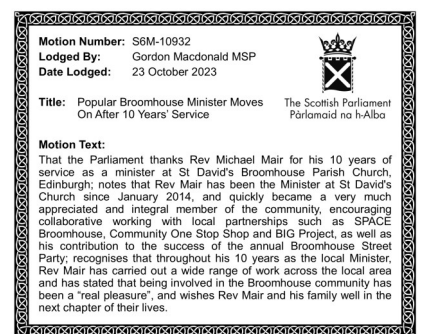
Gordon noted, "Each locality area has been working closely with the Council, fire service, ambulance service, social

landlords and others to develop local plans focussed on prevention, intervention, youth education and diversionary provision."

There will be joint working to provide: -

- Engagement with young people on risk taking behaviour;
- Retailer visits by Trading Standards/Police to off guidance;
- Swift removal of combustible material;
- Diversionary activity to provide education and intervention;
- Patrols to ensure safer public transport; and,
- Dispersal zones to minimise ASB and disorder.

Popular Broomhouse Minister Moves On



Gordon lodged a Parliamentary motion thanking Rev. Michael Mair for his 10 years service as a minister at St David's Broomhouse Parish Church. Rev Mair was an integrall member of the local community who encouraged collaborative working with local partners for the benefit of local area residents.

It's YOUR Scottish Parliament



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Hearing directly from people who live, work, and study in our communities helps MSPs understand better the everyday issues that affect the people of Scotland.

Gordon noted, "You can find details of current and future Parliamentary business on the Parliament's website: www.parliament.scot/business."

Gordon continued, "If you want to share your thoughts and experiences on any of these issues, call the Parliament on 0800 092 7500 and they will advise how you can have your views considered by MSPs and parliamentary committees. Calls are welcome in BSL through contactscotland-bsl.org."

The Scottish Parliament carries out a range of committee inquiries and examines all proposed laws. To do this effectively, they want to ensure that the views of the Scottish people are heard at Holyrood.

Plans for Pension Age Winter Heating Payment



From 2024, the Scottish Pension Age Winter Heating Payment will replace the UK Winter Fuel Payment.

The Scottish Government launched a consultation to

understand who should be eligible for this payment, when and how it should be delivered, and what measures can be put in place to support those living off the gas grid. The consultation closes on January 15th 2024.

Gordon said, "The new Pension Age Winter Heating Payment delivered by the SNP Government will help over a million pensioners in Scotland with their heating costs, including thousands across Edinburgh; therefore, it is vital people make their views known of how this payment can best be delivered."

The link to the consultation is <https://consult.gov.scot/social-security/pension-age-winter-heating-payment>

New Payment For Care Leavers



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Gordon has welcomed the announcement that a one-off £2,000 payment from the SNP Scottish Government will be made available to young people who are leaving the care system.

First Minister Humza Yousaf announced the payment following the Independent Care Review's findings that those with care experience have an increased risk of poor mental health, addiction, homelessness, and exploitation.

The payment is co-designed with care-experienced people to ensure it meets their needs and helps to reduce some financial impediments as they seek to live independently.

Gordon noted, "The SNP Government is committed to Keeping the Promise by 2030 to all children and young people leaving care, and part of that is ensuring that they are supported on their journey into adulthood. This will make a real difference to young people across the city."

Swim Programme Update at Balerno Community High School



Edinburgh Leisure have been facing challenges with recruiting swim coaches at Balerno High School for some time.

Unfortunately, they can no longer continue to deliver the current


programme due to staffing problems and have taken the decision to temporarily pause Sunday swim lessons.

Gordon noted, "These staff shortages are unfortunate given how valuable these lessons are to the community. In the meantime, they have been able to secure some pool time at Wester Hailes High School where they will be introducing a temporary programme with the hope that some of the existing Balerno customers can continue there.

"The school will try to resolve the staffing challenges and for anyone who would be interested in learning more about becoming a swim coach please call Edinburgh Leisure on 0131 270 9307."


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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>