



DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2020

Stuart McMillan MSP

MEMBER OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT FOR
GREENOCK AND INVERCLYDE CONSTITUENCY

HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE 36TH ISSUE OF MY REGULAR NEWSLETTER

It goes without saying that 2020 has been one of the toughest years' that many of us have faced.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every corner of the globe—some worse than others—and governments the world over have had to take difficult decisions to try to save lives and protect livelihoods. I have obviously been focused on Inverclyde; helping local businesses and residents through this crisis. It's been difficult, but our community has rallied round and supported one another.

Inverclyde has its challenges, but the people who live and work here are a huge asset. Every aspect of our community stepped up to help their communities: public sector, third sector and private sector. I know that many people locally found this support life-saving. The roll-out of the vaccine is the light at the end of this long, dark tunnel—but things weren't great for many people before COVID-19 and, once the pandemic has passed, things will remain difficult for some. I hope we take our rekindled community spirit with us into 2021 to continue to work together to support those most in need across Inverclyde.

Instead of sending Christmas cards, I've made a donation to the local foodbank, which I have done for several years now.

Due to purdah, this will be my final newsletter before the Scottish Parliamentary Election in May next year. So I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, even if celebrations this year are very different, and I hope that the New Year brings hope, joy, love and peace to our community. As the saying goes, 'this too shall pass', and when it does, we will come together to heal and rebuild our local community.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart".

SERVING PORT GLASGOW,
GREENOCK, GOUROCK,
WEMYSS BAY AND INVERKIP



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LOCAL BUSINESSES

To mark **Small Business Saturday** (5 December 2020) I visited **Wildfire Deli** on Kempock Street, Gourrock (pictured below). The Deli sells produce from other local businesses and adds to the already fantastic food and drink offering in Gourrock, and I know it is already a huge hit with local people.



I also visited the **Sanmina plant** in Port Glasgow as they're working with **GenusWave** to develop Targeted **Acoustic Startle Technology** to deter predator seals from salmon farms.

Regulations already exist about what equipment can be used for this activity but this technology is new and more humane. With the economic worries caused by COVID-19 and Brexit, this is positive for Inverclyde.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Following concerns raised by constituents, I held a virtual meeting with British Transport Police, ScotRail, and Police Scotland officials regarding anti-social behaviour in and around the rail network. This was a positive discussion and I am assured that the relevant agencies, including community wardens, are working together to tackle this activity.

HEALTH

On 11 December, I attended a virtual briefing by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's about the health board's continued response to COVID-19 and the associated vaccination programme, remobilisation activities and new ways of working. Sessions like this are useful as constituents contact me daily about health issues.

This month, Stuart spoke in two debates and asked six questions in the chamber on a range of topics, including the COVID-19 vaccine, the Scottish Budget, and the drug-related deaths figures for 2019.

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

- **Scottish Government updates:** <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- **Advice for businesses:** <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/coronavirus-advice>
- **Inverclyde Council:** <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/covid-19>

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Due to Covid-19, my office is closed until further notice.

Constituents can still contact me by email and telephone.

Monthly surgeries will be conducted over telephone until further notice.

USEFUL CONTACTS FOR OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD

Coronavirus Helpline

Call 0800 028 2816 if you have a question about COVID-19 that you can't find the answer to online. You can also call Inverclyde Council's COVID-19 Support Helpline on 01475 715275.

Housing Helpline

Call Shelter Scotland on 0808 800 4444 for advice and answers on homelessness, evictions, housing benefit, repairs and more.

Parents Helpline

Call Parentline Scotland on 08000 28 22 33 for tips, advice and support for parents.

Helpline for Elderly People

Call Age Scotland on 0800 12 44 222 for coronavirus advice, help, or simply a friendly voice of support.

Mental Health Helpline

Call Breathing Space Scotland on 0800 83 85 87 for listening, advice and information for people in Scotland feeling low, stressed or anxious. You can also call the local SAMH office on 01475 806013 where staff can offer tools and techniques to reduce anxieties, build confidence and resilience using self-management approaches.

Wellbeing Support for Health & Social Care Workers

Health and social care workers can call a dedicated mental health support helpline for their sector on 0800 111 4191.

Domestic Abuse Helpline

If your partner or family member makes you feel anxious or threatened, call Scotland's Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0800 027 1234.

Employment Advice Helpline

Visit the Acas website or phone 0300 123 1100 for free and impartial advice on employment rights, best practice and policies, and resolving workplace conflict.

Scottish Welfare Fund

This service will be closed on Friday 25 December, Monday 28 December, Friday 1 January and Monday 4 January. The service is available between 9am-3pm from 29-31 December. Call 01475 714444 to apply.

Emergency Social Work Services

Emergency social work services can be accessed by contacting the social work standby service on 0300 343 1505.

Inverclyde Alcohol & Drug Recovery Service

Call 01475 715353 to make a referral.

Inverclyde Foodbank—i58 Project

Call 07506 530 638 to make a referral. The foodbank will be open on 23 December, 30 December and 6 January, with normal opening hours resuming thereafter.

DWP Support

Call 0800 328 5644 for Universal Credit support, and 0800 055 6688 for Jobseekers Allowance support. Please note that department is closed for the Christmas and New Year public holidays.

While my office has remained physically closed due to COVID-19, my staff and I have continued to support constituents from home. From 24 December – 4 January inclusive, my staff and I will only deal with urgent emails or phone calls. Any non-urgent cases will be dealt with when we resume normal working hours on 5 January 2021.



Wishing you a very Merry Christmas

From Stuart McMillan MSP and Staff