

Gordon Macdonald

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Pentlands

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Photograph 2019

Return To Full-Time Schooling



After the significant progress made in reducing incidence rates of the virus, Deputy First Minister John Swinney announced that schools will return full-time in August if Scotland continues to make progress on suppressing coronavirus (COVID-19).

This is conditional on infection rates being sufficiently low to continue to control the virus, public health and testing systems being in place and protective measures being carried out in schools. Councils will continue to prepare blended learning models as a contingency.

Mr Swinney also revealed that an additional £100 million will be invested over the next two years to tackle the impact of lockdown on pupils, including ensuring every current probationer teacher, who meets the standard for full registration, will have a teaching post for the year ahead. This is on top of the investment of £30 million to provide connectivity solutions and tens of thousands of laptops for disadvantaged children and young people.

Gordon Macdonald commented, "Due to the efforts of the people of Scotland, significant progress has been made in stopping the spread of the virus. Infections are down 90% since May, we are seeing several days with zero new infections and intensive care cases are now a fraction of what they were. If we stay on track, I am delighted that the Scottish Government believe that we should prepare for children to return to school full time from August. However, we must remember that this remains dependent upon ongoing scientific advice."

Parliamentary Update



Parliamentary business has not stopped due to COVID-19.

Over the last two-and-a-half months, four new laws have been taken to final vote, as well as two emergency bills related to the pandemic, and one major legislative consent motion.

Gordon said, "The Business of governing Scotland has continued despite the virus.

"We have had to be inventive in how we attend committees and Parliament, with much work done remotely via videoconferencing.

"The bills we have passed during lockdown include an animals and wildlife protection bill, a civil partnerships bill, and an electoral reform bill. I am pleased to say that I have also received many emails in support of these new laws."

ALSO THIS MONTH...

Balerno Fair Trade



The Balerno Fair Trade Group were recently recredited with their Fairtrade Village status.

The group first achieved Fairtrade Village status in 2013 and successfully renewed that status in 2014, 2016 and 2018.

Fairtrade empowers producers in developing countries by tackling what it sees as the injustices in conventional trade, in particular by promoting and licensing the Fairtrade mark as a guarantee that products have been produced in accordance with internationally agreed Fairtrade standards.

Gordon noted, "Becoming a Fairtrade Village sends a powerful message about how a community wants trade to work.

"Fairtrade is a simple way to make a difference to the lives of producers, which helps them enjoy secure and sustainable livelihoods.

"I would like to thank everyone involved in the Balerno Fairtrade Village Group for their continued efforts, and commend the community of Balerno for its commitment and work in helping to achieve and maintain Fairtrade Village status."

Colinton Tunnel



Work on painting the mural at the Colinton Tunnel has resumed during lockdown with socially-distanced measures in place.

The new work includes Juniper Green Primary's magical scene and over 90 metres of brilliantly illustrated poetry.

Lead artists, Chris Rutterford [pictured], was interviewed on STV where an appeal for additional funding was made.

Gordon said, "This is a fantastic project that has brought many in the community together and involved over 400 young people. However, further donations are required to finish the job now that lockdown is easing."

Further details can be found at: - www.colintontunnel.org.uk

Reading Force



Gordon recently lodged a Parliamentary motion celebrating the work of Reading Force.

Founded in 2011 by Dr Alison Baverstock, Reading Force provide free books and competitions for children who have a parent in the Armed Forces. Activities can be undertaken by personnel serving away from home over Skype or FaceTime to help maintain contact with their children.

Gordon commented, "The pandemic has been a significant additional burden for Forces' families where COVID 19-related duties have been added to existing duties. I congratulate Reading Force for meeting the 900% increase in demand for their services. For many serving in the Forces, this contact is vital."

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Monthly Surgeries

Due to the ongoing public health concern, in the interest of public and staff safety, Gordon's surgeries are suspended until further notice but he will continue to handle enquiries as usual.

Working for Edinburgh Pentlands