



@PeteWishartPerth



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@PeteWishartMP



## The latest

### Westminster Chaos

My last newsletter went out just a day after Liz Truss became Prime Minister. In it, I said that she would ensure the rich got richer, whilst forcing millions into poverty. Those predictions were a given based on her campaign, but I don't think anybody could have foreseen the speed or extent to which they would come true.

In her six weeks in office, she managed to cause economic turmoil on a scale that is hard to comprehend. An intervention from the IMF, a bailout from the Bank of England, and a U-turn on every policy that she was elected on. This culminated with the most humiliating prime ministerial resignation in British history.

Thereafter, we were on to our third Prime Minister in as many months, after Rishi Sunak was voted in by less than 200 Tory MPs. Public discontent has only grown under his leadership, with public sector workers being forced

to strike because of his refusal to even consider offering a fair pay increase in the face of real-term cuts. Perhaps they should follow the lead of the Scottish Government, whose willingness to listen and negotiate has led to NHS and local government strikes being called off, with others ongoing.

### Supreme Court Ruling

Whilst obviously disappointing, last month's Supreme Court ruling confirmed a vital piece of information that Yes supporters have known to be the case for quite some time; that the notion of the UK being a voluntary union is a complete fabrication. Far from it, we are being legally trapped in a sinking ship despite electing a pro-independence majority on a mandate to hold another referendum. Ironically, the ruling has achieved the polar opposite outcome to what unionists expected, by energising us all to double down in our fight for Scottish democracy.

### Surge of indy support

Throughout the turmoil in Westminster, and in light of the Supreme Court ruling, the SNP and Yes movements have been going from strength to strength. At the time of writing, four successive polls have shown that a healthy majority of Scots now believe that independence is the safe option, which is a complete reversal of the optics in 2014.

This is my personal favourite front page of the year, and with all of your continued support, I look forward to seeing that number climb higher and higher in the months to come. . .



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# A selection of Perthshire visits

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It was a privilege to close the Perth Citizens Advice Bureau's AGM. It rightly focussed entirely on the cost of living crisis, which is the biggest issue my office has been dealing with recently. Whilst there was dismay that this was necessary in an advanced nation in the year 2022, there was equally a collective determination to find cross-sector solutions. Just like during Covid, the third sector is on the frontline of the cost-of-living crisis. It is absolutely vital that their needs are heard and met in order to get through the extremely challenging months ahead.



I recently held surgeries in Aberfeldy, Blairgowrie and Dunkeld, at a time when things have rarely been as precarious for people. My office has been working flat out to assist with my constituents' most pressing concerns. This has included helping with Home Office cases, to assisting with issues relating to energy bills and benefits. It goes without saying that I will continue to do everything I can to help any constituents who have been adversely affected by hostile UK Government departments.



It was great to visit Robertsons of Pitlochry recently, as part of Small Business Saturday. I caught up with Ewan Mcilwraith about the number of economic challenges that businesses like his are experiencing, largely because of Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis. Perthshire is famed for its incredible variety of independent establishments, and there has never been a more important time to support them. I would like to thank any readers with a small business for your resilience throughout the past few years, and hope that the Christmas period is bringing a well-earned boost to trade.



It was fantastic to attend the opening night of Pitlochry's acclaimed Enchanted Forest. This year's theme, 'Together', felt most fitting after the event had to be cancelled for the last two years due to Covid restrictions. Each year it becomes even bigger and more immersive, and is now an invaluable asset to the local economy. They expected to welcome more than 80,000 visitors over five weeks, which is a remarkable achievement and a testament to the hard work of everybody involved.



It was a privilege to attend the Manzil restaurant in Perth's charitable dinner to raise funds for disaster relief in Pakistan following August's devastating floods. Perth's South Asian community may be small, but it is big-hearted and generous, attested by the fantastic £6,000 raised at the event. In times of tragedy, the people of Perthshire never fail to offer support and solidarity, and this was another example. I hope that communities and governments continue to rally round Pakistan as they now look to rebuild and recover.

# Out and about with colleagues

It was good to be out canvassing in Errol with Councillor Ken Harvey and local activists. We had an overwhelmingly positive response on the doors, with the recurring theme being one of outrage at the UK Government's arrogance in believing it can block Scottish democracy. Others were vocal about how let down they feel by Labour. Keir Starmer has made it clear that he will not grant another referendum, proving that it is not the Tories being in power at Westminster that is the issue. It is Westminster itself.



There were events all across Perthshire to mark Remembrance Day. I attended the service and military parade with John Swinney MSP at St John's Kirk in Perth on the Friday, followed by a church service there on Remembrance Sunday. Jim Fairlie MSP and I also attended the service of remembrance at the Polish war graves the week before. With the unimaginable horrors we are seeing in Ukraine, this year's services felt all the more powerful. It has never been more important to stand up for our freedoms, whilst remembering the soldiers who died fighting for them.



The turnout at the public flood meeting I held in Craigie is testament to what a huge issue this now is in Perth city. Locals are fed up that their concerns are being passed about and brushed off by stakeholders – they simply want action. As the threat of climate change worsens, all stakeholders have a duty to work collectively to better protect these areas from future flooding events. The dialogue initiated at the meeting was a good starting point, and I look forward to continuing this with a follow-up meeting next year.



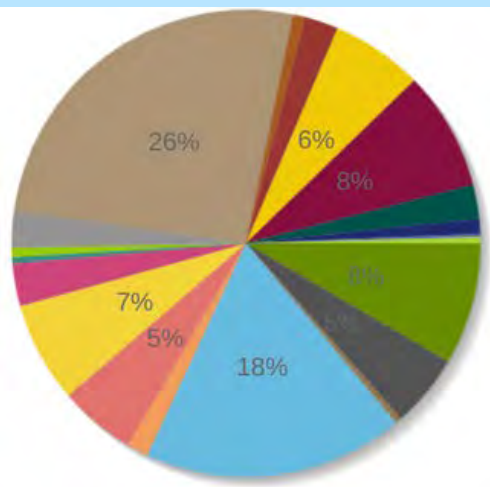
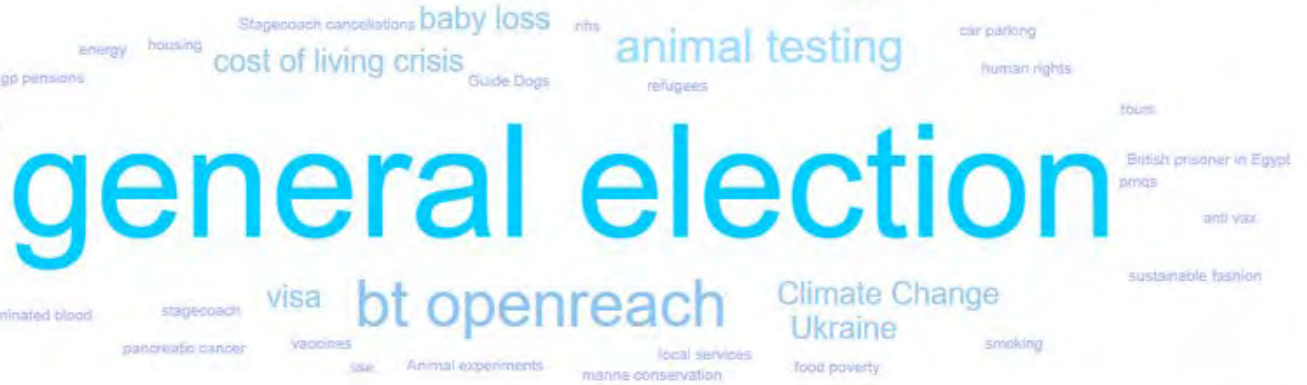
I was delighted to attend the torch lighting procession to mark the start of Mòd Pheairt 2022 with Councillor Eric Drysdale; the first time the Fair City has played host since 2004. The two-week celebration provided an electric atmosphere throughout and gave a huge boost to the local economy. Perth has amongst the richest cultural histories in Scotland. It was fantastic to see that legacy continue with some of the best Gaelic singers, musicians, dancers and writers across Scotland taking part.



I thoroughly enjoyed speaking at a Scotch Whisky reception at this year's SNP conference. It is no secret that the whisky industry is one of our most valuable economic and cultural assets, and we must continue to promote it at every opportunity. I am sure readers who were in Aberdeen will agree that conference was a resounding success; filled with camaraderie, lively debate and heartfelt testimonies. Of course, it reached a climax with a speech from our First Minister, the elegance and passion of which was a reminder of how lucky we are to have her as our leader.



# Casework



- Health services and medicine
- Education
- Housing and planning
- Employment and training
- Communities and families
- Culture, charities, media and sport
- HMRC
- Asylum, immigration and nationality
- Business, industry and consumers
- Defence
- Social Security and pensions
- Energy, utilities and environment
- Crime, civil law, justice and rights
- Transport
- Economy and finance
- Parliament, government and politics
- Local Government
- Agriculture, animals, food and rural affairs
- Unmapped Casetype
- Social services and social care

By far the most common subject in my inbox since my last newsletter has been about holding an early general election. Following the calamity of Liz Truss, I was flooded with constituents who were rightly appalled and who called for an immediate general election. This is a view that my SNP colleagues and I share entirely. But whilst an early general election now seems unlikely, a Tory electoral wipe-out is still not a matter of if, but when. Many Tories have already conceded that they will be out of a job at the next election, for they know that the damage they have done will not be forgotten nor forgiven by 2024.

## Some recent votes

**VOTED AYE**

**NHS Workforce Bill**  
- 06 December 22

This opposition day bill called on the government end non-domiciled tax status regime which currently costs taxpayers £3.2 billion a year. The funds raised would be used to invest in the NHS workforce by, for example, doubling the number of medical training places.

**VOTED NO**

**Retained EU Law Bill**  
- 25 October 2022

This bill aims to repeal retained EU laws that were carried over following Brexit. It threatens a host of rights, including workers' rights and data protection rights. It would give more power to the executive and open the door for further corruption in Westminster. SNP MPs continue to oppose this reckless bill.

**VOTED NO**

**Public Order Bill**  
- 28 October 2022

This draconian bill is a flagrant attack on freedom of expression. It is drafted so broadly so as to potentially allow harsh penalties being given to people for simply sharing a post online or handing out a leaflet relating to a protest.