

STRUAN MACKIE

Your Scottish Conservative and Unionist candidate for Caithness, Sutherland & Ross

'Fighting for the North of Scotland'



As this newsletter is being issued whilst we are still in the throws of what is a global pandemic, I wish to start by acknowledging how encouraged I have been to see our communities across the North of Scotland have come together. The local groups, volunteers and frontline workers should all be commended for their efforts in the last six months. We are indebted to them all. Thank you.

As we look to rid ourselves of the coronavirus and rebuild our country and economy, in a matter of months a pivotal election for Scotland is around the corner. Whilst I have been getting on with my day job and focusing on delivering for my constituents and local communities around Caithness, it has become increasingly clear that the SNP have eyes on only one thing... independence and another divisive referendum..

The following short articles act as a quick update on what I am doing to stop the SNP retaining Caithness, Sutherland and Ross next May and to help highlight why constituents across the North of Scotland need a real local champion in Holyrood. I would be delighted to hear what you think, my contact details are on the right-hand side of this section.

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COUNCIL BOUNDARY CHANGES WILL HIT RURAL HIGHLAND MOST



Struan in central Sutherland

The Boundary Commission for Scotland's proposed changes for the Highland Council are unacceptable and must be stopped.

Ripping apart the current ward structure will see Caithness, Sutherland and rural Ross-shire lose seats on the already Inverness-heavy Council. With the whole County of Sutherland absorbed into one local authority ward!

I have helped lead the campaign to stop these plans, working cross-party in the Highland Chamber to give remote and rural Highland a voice against the Commission.

It is deeply unfair that whilst the Islands have been protected from centralised democracy by the Scottish Government, rural Highland continues to be hit by plans to concentrate power in our large cities.

If you want to support my campaign, please sign our petition: www.change.org/boundarycommissionhighland

PLANS NEEDED TO STOP ANTI-SOCIAL TOURISM

I am calling on the Highland Council and Scottish Government to 'get tough' with visitors who take advantage of our world-famous Highland hospitality and commit antisocial behaviour in the region.

As a Member of the Council's Tourism Committee I have been appalled to see irresponsible wild-camping, littering, vandalism and inappropriate behaviour across North Highlands, with communities rightly unhappy and upset.

I am calling for widespread enforcement measures to penalize unacceptable conduct and for tourism bodies such as Visit Scotland and North Coast 500 to do more to prevent it. It should be crystal clear: if you are caught being an irresponsible tourist, you will be punished.



Litter left by an antisocial campervan in Wester Ross

ACTION NEEDED ON WINDFARM PAYMENTS

Due to the National Grid being unable to cope with the increasing renewable power production across the Far North of Scotland, the scandalous policy of constraint payments for windfarms continues.

Last year, windfarms in the County of Sutherland alone received over £63.5million NOT to operate. A figure larger than the combined constraint payments for the whole of England and Wales for the same year.

It is clear the energy policy at both Holyrood and Westminster is broken and I am calling for a reform of the practice and an immediate review of our National Grid system supporting local suppliers.

It is unacceptable that when thousands across Highland are living with fuel poverty, foreign multinational companies are being paid when their wind turbines aren't turning!



Struan is campaigning to reform our National Grid amidst rising fuel poverty in the region

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PORT OF NIGG



This September I visited the Port of Nigg as part of a scheduled visit with fellow Highland Councillors.

After being given a tour of the facility, it was concerning to hear that despite the billions being invested into both onshore and off-shore renewables, very little work is being sent to yards like Nigg. Although many elements of the wind turbines and their platforms can be made far cheaper overseas, the skills and experience built up over decades in Easter Ross should be perfectly placed to make the area a global leader.

That is why I am backing the UK Government's Free Ports initiative for Cromarty. An exciting opportunity to make Easter Ross a global gateway for the UK and incentivize businesses to invest money in the area.

MY FIGHT AGAINST FUNERAL POVERTY

When I was elected three years ago I made a promise that I would do everything I could to help end the scandal that is funeral poverty. I am deeply disappointed that the Highland Council continues make no progress on the matter, particularly at a time of such national hardship due to the Coronavirus.

In June this year, I wrote to Scottish Government Ministers demanding them to act if the Highland Council would not. We cannot accept a postcode lottery when it comes to burying our loved ones and I will do everything that I can to keep fighting until this disgraceful practice is 'made right'.

RETURN OF THE CAITHNESS PROVOSTS IS A CAMPAIGN PROMISE DELIVERED

When I campaigned to become a Councillor for the Thurso and Northwest Caithness ward, I put forward decentralisation and localism as my priority policies.

Last month, I delivered on this promise, with the County of Caithness regaining it's Provost roles. This reverses a decades-long decision when district Councils were abolished and the Highland Regional Authority was established in Inverness.

I am incredibly proud to have proposed this change and to have delivered directly elected Provosts back to the county. I am also blessed and humbled to accept the nomination as the Provost of Thurso for the remainder of the Council term.



Struan at Sandside, in West Caithness

BACKING OUR GREAT BRITISH BUSINESSES



Struan in Thurso for the Support our High Streets campaign.

Because of COVID-19 and the lockdown measures that actively discouraged people from leaving their homes for much of the year, it is clear that we need to support our High Streets like never before. That is why I am supporting the Scottish Conservatives' Support our High Streets campaign.

During the reopening of the high street in July and August, I spoke to traders across Caithness, Sutherland and Ross-Shire about their experiences of lockdown, how their businesses were recovering and asked what further help can be given to keep the doors open.

The Chancellors package of measures were well received by business, especially the Eat Out to Help Out scheme that ensured that local eateries, cafes and restaurants had customers during the slower parts of the week.

Urgent action by the UK Government protected jobs and livelihoods and as part of the United Kingdom, businesses in Caithness, Sutherland and Ross-shire benefited from the financial strength of the British Treasury. Whilst the UK Government focus remains getting through the Coronavirus and building our country back up, the SNP remain fixated on another divisive referendum.