

Stirling Matters - November 2020 (12th Edition)

News from Stirling's Parliamentary Team

'Stirling has been placed into Level 3 within the Scottish Government's new Strategic Framework to tackle COVID-19. We know times remain extremely challenging for businesses, workers and communities right across Stirling, and many feel frustrated. Yet the people of Stirling have demonstrated extraordinary resilience and spirit throughout this pandemic. The new system of protections affords much more flexibility than the blanket bans we saw in March. None of these decisions are straightforward, but we remain confident Stirling can make good progress toward Level 2.'

- Bruce Crawford MSP and Alyn Smith MP

Keep up-to-date with current campaigns and news on my website:

www.alynsmith.scot

I'm active at: @alynsmith

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/alynsmithSNP>

Twitter: www.twitter.com/alynsmith

Keep up-to-date with current campaigns and news on my website:

www.brucecrawford.scot

I'm active at: @RHBruceCrawford

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BruceCrawfordSNP>

Twitter: www.twitter.com/RHBruceCrawford

Update on Stirling's COVID-19 Fight

The Scottish Government's new system of protection levels in the fight against COVID-19 came into force on Monday 2nd November.

The 5 Level system, part of 'Scotland's Strategic Framework', sets out what changes local authority areas can expect, based on how they're performing against the virus.

Stirling has been placed in Level 3, with reviews scheduled weekly through the Scottish Parliament.

Read more here:

<https://alynsmith.scot/2020/10/29/update-on-stirlings-fight-against-covid/>

Growing consensus on firework control

Bruce has backed growing calls from across civic society, for a re-think on firework regulation.

The Independent Firework Review Group, put together by the Scottish Government, has called for tighter restrictions in the use and sale of fireworks.

Fireworks and celebrations around this time of year continue to be a source of fun for communities across Scotland - whilst also presenting increased safety risks and harm to animals and mental health.

Find out more here:

<http://www.brucecrawford.scot/bruce-crawford-msp-joins-calls-for-tighter-firework-control/>

Furlough flexibility needs clarified

Alyn and Bruce are calling on the UK Chancellor to provide further clarity on the furlough scheme, particularly its use by devolved governments.

The Chancellor recently announced an extension of the scheme to March 2021 - seen by many as a welcome, if not late, development.

There remains uncertainty over how and when devolved governments can utilise the furlough scheme, to support public health measures and decisions taken in their respective areas.

Read more here:

<http://www.brucecrawford.scot/stirling-politicians-call-for-scottish-furlough-flexibility/>

Stirling holidaymakers owed £1.4 million

Holidaymakers in the Stirling area could be owed around £1.4 million in delayed refunds, according to consumer organisation Which?.

The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed thousands of flights and disrupted tourism industries across the globe.

Those affected are urged to get in touch with Alyn's office.

Read more here:

<https://alynsmith.scot/2020/11/04/holidaymakers-in-stirling-owed-over-1-4-million-in-withheld-refunds/>

700 low-income households supported

Figures released from the Scottish Welfare Fund have shown 695 households supported in the Stirling area within the last financial quarter - a jump of almost 48% on last year.

Over £5.2 million in crisis grant funding was issued across Scotland between April and June 2020, an increase of 77% from 2019.

Find out more here:

<http://www.brucecrawford.scot/700-low-income-households-in-stirling-supported-by-snp-government/>

UK Gov should not resume VAT on PPE equipment

Alyn has hit out at the UK government plans to resume charging VAT on PPE equipment, after lowering it to 0% in May.

Trade unions and opposition parties initially won an extension from the August resumption to October 31st, but another freeze has not been forthcoming.

Read more here:

<https://alynsmith.scot/2020/10/27/local-mp-hits-out-at-uk-gov-ppe-vat-resumption/>

Scottish Child Payment opens for applications early

A new 'game-changing' grant aimed at tackling child poverty has opened early for applications.

Providing eligible families on low incomes with a child under 6, an extra £10 per week for each child, Bruce Crawford hopes over 3000 children in the Stirling area will benefit from the scheme.

Read more here:

<http://www.brucecrawford.scot/game-changer-scottish-child-payment-opens-early-for-applications/>

Public consultation on free bus travel for under 19s

Bruce is urging the public across Stirling to have their say on new Scottish Government proposals for free bus travel for under 19s.

Over 700,000 young people across Scotland stand to benefit under current plans, with provision also made for companions of disabled children aged 5 and under.

Read more here:

<http://www.brucecrawford.scot/public-urged-to-have-their-say-on-free-bus-travel-for-young-people-under-19/>

For further help & support, visit:

NHS Inform: COVID-19

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

Scot Gov:Business Support

<https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/>

Stirling Council: Guidance

<https://www.stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/emergencies-emergency-planning/coronavirus/>