

Stirling Matters - August 2022 (35th Edition)  
News from Stirling's Parliamentary Team

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### [UK Government 'Asleep at the Wheel' on Fuel Costs](#)

Stirling MP Alyn Smith has lambasted the UK Government's handling of soaring fuel costs, as the logistics industry sound the alarm over significant cost pressures. In a letter to the UK Chancellor, Mr Smith highlights the worrying spike in operational costs for haulage firms, with the Road Haulage Association reporting a 17% rise in the costs of running a single truck in the past year. With profit margins extremely slim at around 2%, firms may have little option but to pass on additional costs through supply chains – with end-consumers paying at the till.

### [Evelyn blasts Tory candidate hopefuls for their silence on child poverty](#)

The candidates vying to become the UK's next Prime Minister have been criticised for being "silent" on child poverty and cost

of living concerns by Stirling's MSP. Evelyn Tweed has raised her criticism in the wake of two reports last week highlighting the challenges being faced by families living on the breadline both in Stirling and across Scotland. Data from Citizens Advice Scotland published on Thursday revealed that the number of people requiring advice on food banks went up by close to a third - 31 per cent - since September 2021; while advice on Universal Credit sanctions went up by more than 50 per cent in the same period.

### [Leading Role for Stirling in National 'Tech Scaler' Network](#)

Leading technology firm Codebase has been awarded a £42m Scottish Government contract to develop a national network of 'tech scaler' hubs across Scotland, as part of plans to drive digital innovation – with Stirling set to join six other host cities across the nation. Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dumfries, Dundee, Inverness and Stirling will play host to up and coming digital technology start-ups and firms, as part of a series of measures to strengthen the tech ecosystem and drive forward economic growth.

### [New Indy Paper Highlights Democratic Case for Independence](#)

SNP MSP Evelyn Tweed has warned Westminster politicians that they cannot deny the choice of the people of Stirling by ignoring democracy, as the second in the series of papers on independence is published by the Scottish Government. The

latest paper, titled 'Renewing Democracy through Independence', outlines how Scotland's voice has been ignored at key points in recent decades – from the failure to invest North Sea oil and gas revenues like other neighbouring nations did, to the crippling decade of Tory austerity and delivering a hard Brexit that Scotland overwhelmingly rejected.

### [Local MP Calls on Public Votes for Mugdock Country Park](#)

Alyn Smith MP is encouraging support for Mugdock Country Park as the UK's Favourite Park, in a nationwide public vote organised by green space charity Fields in Trust. The park is one of Scotland's most popular visitor attractions, with figures from Stirling Council boasting around 600,000 visitors per year. Spread over the boundaries of Stirling and East Dunbartonshire, the park has a long, proud history and hosts several outdoor activities – including walking and hiking trails, horse riding, archery and more.

### [Stirling teacher uses art composed from hospital bed to raise ovarian cancer awareness](#)

A Stirling artist who painted NHS staff who cared for her during treatment for ovarian cancer is hoping to raise greater awareness of the disease. Gillian McLaren, who works as a secondary school art teacher, was just 33 years old when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer - undergoing lifesaving

surgery during the first wave of the Covid pandemic. Before receiving the devastating diagnosis, Gillian visited doctors for more than 18 months with various concerns including bowel changes, exhaustion, nausea, pain and symptoms of urine infections.

### [Dragonflies on the Hunt](#)

This week Evelyn explored the [Flanders Moss National Nature Reserve](#) on the search for Common Hawker & Northern Emerald Dragonflies with Daniele from the British Dragonfly Society and Amy & David from NatureScot. This Saturday visitors can also explore Flanders Moss in search for dragonflies at this event; <https://bit.ly/3QhPTnL>

### [Local Exhibition of 'The Beatles' Wows Local MP](#)

Stirling MP Alyn Smith has warmly welcomed an exciting collaboration from local institutions Creative Stirling and Europa Music, commemorating an event which shaped the music landscape of Forth Valley for generations: The Beatles performing in Bridge of Allan in 1963. Visiting Creative Stirling's 'Made in Stirling' premises on Kings Street, Mr Smith was toured around the interactive exhibition '*SUPERFAN: Stirling's Story of The Beatles*', which has been designed and curated around a collection of Beatles and other sixties music print ephemera, obsessively collected and carefully archived over the years by local SUPERFAN Douglas Montgomery.

## [Loch Katrine at Forefront of Stirling Tourism Boom](#)

Loch Katrine will play a pivotal role in the future of Stirling's tourism, argues Stirling MP Alyn Smith after a visit alongside local Stirling Councillor Gene Maxwell to the popular tourism destination. Meeting with James Fraser, CEO and Trustee of the Steamship Trust, Mr Smith and Mr Maxwell were left impressed with ongoing development and improvement plans for the world-class visitor attraction. For hundreds of years, visitors from across Scotland and the world have visited Loch Katrine, which boasts ship tours, hiking trails and cycle routes – as well as the remarkable accolade as the 'birthplace of Scottish tourism'.