



Malcolm Bruce MP - Annual Report

2009

Dear resident,



The coming year will be my twenty-sixth year as your local MP. It continues to be an honour and a privilege to represent the people of Gordon at Westminster.

The past year has been a varied one, with local residents and businesses facing difficulties due to high energy prices and the general state of the economy. During 2008, I have fought for local post offices, continued to support improvements to our local transport infrastructure, and have brought the Government's attention to the difficulties faced by residents who have to rely on oil for heating.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your contribution - it has been invaluable. The dedicated efforts of residents who wrote to me regarding the Post Office Card Account undoubtedly paid a large part in the decision to award the contract to the Post Office. I was also pleased to see such a large turnout at the public meeting to discuss post office closures.

If you have any issues or concerns you would like to raise with me please contact my office on 01467 623 413. To arrange an appointment at one of my regular advice surgeries, please contact 013398 89120.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Malcolm Bruce".

Malcolm Bruce

P.S Before reading my report, I would be grateful if you could take a few moments to complete the survey opposite. It will help me to continue to represent you effectively.



Parliamentary survey

Return free of charge to Malcolm Bruce MP, FREEPOST, 71 High Street, Inverurie, AB51 3QJ

I am always interested to hear what you think. Please help me continue to represent you effectively by completing my five-minute Parliamentary Survey

Which of the following issues are most important to you (please tick a maximum of three)?

- Local economy
- Crime
- Housing
- Transport
- Health
- Environment
- Pensions

How often do you use your local Post Office?

- Daily
- Weekly

- Monthly
- Seldom

How often do you use public transport?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Seldom

Do you feel that local public transport offers value for money?

- Yes
- No

Which of the following do you feel would be most appropriate in the current economic climate? (please tick a maximum of three)

- Cutting business taxation

- Increasing investment in infrastructure
- Cutting personal taxation
- Help with fuel bills
- Other (please specify)

About you

Name.....

Email.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

Data protection: The information provided is for the use of Malcolm Bruce and his office only. The information provided will not be passed to a third party or any other organisation.



Speaking out for local residents

In challenging economic times, Malcolm has spoken out for local people.

He has called for a meeting with Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, to explain the problems faced by many residents who do not have access to the mains gas network.

"Across the constituency, worried residents tell me that high heating oil prices are impacting heavily on their household bills.

"A meeting with the Secretary of State would provide a valuable opportunity to discuss the full impact that these high prices are having on people across Aberdeenshire and to discuss what role the Government can take to assist those concerned."

- Malcolm Bruce, November 2008

The announcement that International Paper intends to consult on the future of Inverurie Paper Mill threatens 200 years of paper-making history in the town. Malcolm is in close contact with the relevant parties to ensure the best possible outcome for staff at the Mill.



At Ellon Farmers' Market



Speaking out in Parliament



Malcolm has been taking action on heating oil prices (left) and Inverurie Paper Mill (right)

In response to the HBOS-Lloyds TSB merger, Malcolm called for the two banks to remain separate. He continues to believe that the interests of business and consumers will be best represented if the merged banks maintain their separate identities and business plans.

Speaking up for local businesses

Malcolm has always believed that a strong private sector is essential if the North East is to maintain its prosperity.

The present volatility in the price of oil has mixed blessings for business. Much of the employment in Gordon is based around servicing the oil and gas industry, and relatively high oil prices have contributed to high rates of economic activity and low unemployment.

Malcolm Bruce: Just before we move on to the effect on transport, you have mentioned the North Sea... can you tell us what you are prepared to do to ensure that we maximise the production from our own resources for oil and gas in the UK and, if I may make a local point, what you will do to support the infrastructure on the ground..?

- Questioning the Prime Minister at the July Meeting of the Liaison Committee

Malcolm has consistently called on the Government to ensure a stable tax regime for the North Sea, in order to provide the best possible environment for investment.



At Bristow Helicopters with Nick Clegg MP



Visiting local business Sparrows Offshore

The downside of high oil prices has been rocketing costs for businesses that rely on energy or transport fuel. Malcolm has met with Tesco to urge them to review the differences in fuel and petrol prices across Gordon. He is also, in response to suggestions from local businesses, exploring whether the Government is prepared to change the minimum fill regulation for heating oil. This would allow businesses - and consumers - to more closely tailor the amount of oil they buy to the amount they use.



*Clockwise from left: With colleague Alison McInnes MSP at Potterton during Malcolm's summer tour;
Visiting local factory AyeCan in Dyce;
Celebrating BBC subtitling with Director-General Mark Thompson; Speaking to pupils at Oldmachar Academy*

The year in pictures...



Clockwise from left: with Olympic swimmer Hannah Miley and the Garioch Swimmers; visiting Tearfund and Soul Action's "Slum Survivor" project; raising a glass to the Axe the Beer Tax campaign; meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss funding of BSL interpreters



Supporting transport improvements

Malcolm continues to campaign for better transport links in the North East.

In the past year, he has held an Adjournment Debate to call for investment in cross-border rail, and has pressed Scottish Government ministers to commit to the Crossrail project.

"We need a real commitment to invest in high-speed trains for journeys that include the central belt and we need investment in efficient connecting links."

- Malcolm Bruce, Adjournment Debate on Cross-Border Rail, January 2008

Malcolm comments "I welcome recent announcements of improved services on the Aberdeen-Inverness line. However, this does not change my opinion that a step-change in investment is needed.

"The Crossrail project was always intended to compliment the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. It should not be seen as an optional extra."

As MP for a substantial portion of Aberdeen City, Malcolm has supported efforts to improve the Haudagain Roundabout and to build a Third Don Crossing.



Malcolm has continued to press for a commuter rail service (left, above) as well as a Third Don crossing (right)



Campaigning for local Post Offices

Gordon's Post Offices have had a mixed experience in the past year.

The North East region was subject to the Post Office consultation programme in the summer. Rhynie, Lumsden, Kennethmont and Collieston faced replacement by an outreach service. Malcolm held a public meeting with Post Office officials in Rhynie to urge Royal Mail to reconsider their plans. Despite Malcolm's efforts, and a spirited local campaign, the Post Office made few changes to their final plan.

"It was disappointing that the Post Office did not listen to our representations about the volumes of business that will be affected", Malcolm commented. "Many constituents and I had argued that this in itself would justify the additional hours requested. I will continue to monitor the situation"

A more positive development was the announcement in late November that the Post Office would continue to operate the Post Office Card Account. Commenting on the announcement in the House, Malcolm paid tribute to the efforts of local campaigners.



Campaigning for Post Offices across Gordon

"This is clearly the right decision... Is it not time to end the attrition against the Post Office network and to start building it up with new services?"

- Malcolm Bruce, welcoming the decision to award the POCA contract to the Post Office - House of Commons, 13th November 2008 (*Hansard*, Column 980)

International Development update

As Chair of the International Development Committee, Malcolm was invited to the Prime Minister's food summit at Downing Street.

Though Malcolm's primary role at the summit was to assess the impact of the Government's food policy on the world's poor, he also pointed out that farmers in the North East deserve a fair return for their efforts

In the past year, the Committee has examined the effectiveness of the Government's international aid programme, as well as examining maternal health, Afghanistan and the World Food Programme. It has also published reports on DfID's HIV-AIDS strategy and the humanitarian and development situation in the Occupied Palestinian territories.

Information on the Committee's work can be found at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/international_development.cfm



Commemorating World Aids Day (left), with a paranatal group in Vietnam (top right), at a girls' school in Afghanistan (bottom right)

"Transparency is one of those issues that is very easy to talk about and a lot more difficult to deliver. It is not always possible to turn every expenditure of cash into a measurable result, but we must try to do it, as far as possible... to reassure taxpayers at home that the money is being spent effectively to achieve the objectives and to reassure people in the countries on the receiving end that their Governments are using the money to good effect."

-Malcolm Bruce, House of Commons, November 2008

In brief...

In the past year, Malcolm has...

Met with the Prime Minister to seek further legal recognition and protection for sign language users so they can fully integrate into British society (and secured funding for a pilot project).

Supported Save the Children's "Knit One, Save One" campaign (and delivered hundreds of hats knitted by local residents to No. 10 Downing Street - thank you!)

Signed 261 Early Day Motions

Received answers to 66 written questions and spoken in 35 debates - both above average amongst MPs (source: www.theyworkforyou.com)

Has been working to introduce a Bill to change the law on school bus safety.

Called for the protection of jobs at the Diamond Envelope factory in Dyce, after they lost a major contract

Congratulated local swimmer Hannah Miley on her Olympic performance (and continued to call for better

facilities for sportsmen and women across the North East.)

And has helped hundreds of constituents with their CSA, tax credit, national and local government related problems...



*Knitting a baby's hat.
Speaking to Auchaber Church Group about Save the Children's campaign... and delivering hundreds of finished hats to 10 Downing Street*

How to contact Malcolm Bruce MP



BY EMAIL

Email Malcolm at
info@malcolmbruce.org.uk



BY POST

Write to Malcolm at
67 High Street
Inverurie
Aberdeenshire AB51 3QJ



BY PHONE

Phone Malcolm's office on
01467 623413



WEBSITE

Keep up to date with what
Malcolm's doing at
www.malcolmbruce.org.uk

**The Gordon
Westminster
Constituency covers...**

The Gordon constituency covers a large area including Dyce, Danestone, Bankhead and Bridge of Don in the City of Aberdeen and Kintore, Inverurie, Huntly, Ellon, Insch, Oldmeldrum, Newmachar, Rhynie, Lumsden, Pitmedden, Tarves, Potterton, Balmedie, and Newburgh in Aberdeenshire. It is the only constituency which covers both City and Shire.

This list is not exhaustive - if you are unsure, please contact the office