



Chris Stephens MP

GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

MP newsletter covering some of my work
both in Westminster and in the Constituency

December 2022



*Merry Christmas
and a good
New Year*

FROM
CHRIS STEPHENS MP
AND TEAM

Festive Opening Times

My Constituency Office staff will be on leave for the festive period from the afternoon of Friday 23rd December and return on Wednesday 4th January. During this time, the office will be closed, however, voicemails and emails will be monitored, and emergency cases actioned.

Working hard for everyone in Glasgow South West

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Chris Stephens MP

GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

Review of the year

If, in the wee hours of January 2022, you had consulted your Horoscope, Mystic Meg or indeed a broadsheet newspaper's analysis of the coming year and they had mentioned half the madness that actually happened I expect there would have been much hilarity, particularly if read out at a Ne'er day get together.

I would sincerely like to say 2022 has been an extraordinary year which I truly doubt we will see the like of again in our lifetimes, but the way things have gone since 2020 I will not be drawn into saying things that may not be true.

I started the year in Parliament with a question to the [Prime Minister about Covid-19](#). For those keeping track, the PM was someone called Boris Johnson and Covid-19 was an illness that had completely altered life as we know it.

It seemed then as business as usual in Westminster. A blustering, law breaking PM, intent only on his vanity image of being a second Churchill with no intention of accepting or acknowledging his role in one of the greatest civilian losses of life in the UK since the Bubonic plague. Not WW2 you say? No, that only accounted for approximately 70,000 civilians. People died; Boris lied.

Then came the Winter Olympics in China. A chance for the world to show some unity and commonality of humanity. As long as we ignored the Human rights violations of China against the Uyghurs, their brutal Covid lockdowns, the ongoing intrusion in Tibet and the constant threat to Taiwan.

It was then that the first whispers of what was to come surfaced. What was Putin up to on the borders of Ukraine? Only 4 days after the end of the Olympics we found out.

The first most of us likely knew of Volodymyr Zelenskyy was his now famous quote "The fight is here. I need ammunition, not a ride" purportedly to the US when they offered to evacuate him and his family to safety.

What has happened since in Ukraine will be the subject of countless history books and has even touched the lives of us all in Glasgow South West with the arrival of the MS Ambition which now houses over 1,000 Ukrainian Refugees who I am proud to represent as an MP. Glasgow has an amazing reputation for our defence of refugees, from the streets of Pollokshields to the home we gave to Poles during WW2 amongst many examples. Glasgow leads the way in showing sanctuary to those in difficulty.

Then came the downfall of Boris Johnson. Because of his lawbreaking? Because of his ineptitude during Covid? Because of his rumoured multitude of infidelities? Because

of his unmitigated incompetence? No. simply because he promoted a previously unheard-of MP called Chris Pincher to deputy Chief Whip. It turns out that everyone knew that Pincher had a number of complaints about sexual misconduct. Boris' role? He knew of the allegations in 2017.

This set in motion a quite extraordinary train of events.

While Scotland is constantly denied a right to choose its leaders and policies, the Tory membership that constitute less than 1% of the UK population chose a new leader. Liz Truss. What on earth were they thinking? The only rational explanation is the raw sewage the Tory MPs voted to dump in England's drinking water sources had poisoned the minds of those same voters. However, I am not a doctor and this is just a theory I heard.

After months of Zombie Government with Johnson still supposedly at the helm though actually on perma-holiday, [Liz Truss hit the ground](#). Not running, just hit it.

This catastrophic administration then managed to almost totally collapse the economy, reeling as it already was from the impending fuel cost rises. The Pound almost hit parity with the US Dollar. Truss and Kwarteng had to go. At any other time the whole Government would have collapsed and we would see a general election. What did we get? One of the richest men in the UK was now the PM. Not only had the Tories changed their mind again on a new leader, but now it was only the MP's who were allowed a say. Interestingly the Lords weren't. For once the Tories recognised that an unelected body shouldn't have a part in telling the rest of us who should be PM.

The reign of the new PM lasted just 45 days. A new UK record, unbroken since George Canning died in office after 5 months in 1827.

While 45 days speaks volumes of the chaos caused by Liz, the Instagram PM, and her Kamikaze Chancellor, truthfully, she was fortunate to last as long as she did.

In September, during her short time as Prime Minister, we had the sad passing of Her Majesty the Queen. A monarch who touched many lives during her long reign.

Now we have Sunak as Prime Minister. A man who was not aware of the concept of [how to buy a can of Coke](#) at a garage. A man happy to wag his finger sternly at Putin yet makes no noise about his father in law's business still [trading with Russia](#). For those on benefits, you will be well aware that a partner is included in what household income is taken in to account. Not so the PM though. Rules for thee, but not for me.

In October the fuel price crisis started to hit. The UK was already amongst the [highest](#)

[cost per kWh](#) whilst in Europe before Brexit. Now we are talking about warm banks to go along with our foodbanks. Still, at least we have blue passports. As expected, the Government decided that rather than shoulder the blame for a lack of strategic infrastructure and stocks, the real fault should be with Putin. This does not explain why [Ukraine in March](#) was paying less than half of UK electricity consumers despite being at war.

'Putin's Fault' has become a theme for this Government, from Nadhim Zahawi's appearance on BBC Question Time, [to my own encounter](#) with Grant Shapps in the House of Commons and many others. Now the strikes are becoming part of the 'Putin's Fault' narrative. As a lifelong trade unionist I am incredulous that a Russian Dictator can be blamed for the fault of the Government for many years of real terms pay cuts to workers across the UK. Don't bother looking to Labour for salvation on this. Some of you may recall that [Keir Starmer sacked me](#) for attending picket lines earlier this year. Labour MP's have been warned not to attend picket lines by Starmer. A Knight of the realm, leading the party of the workers, telling those workers they will not be supported by the party founded to protect their rights. Labour no more.

As Christmas approaches it is worth remembering that action by the Unions gave us paid holidays amongst many other rights and that is why I will continue to support the workers. Expect me on many more picket lines. This is one of the many reasons I also continue to fight for Scotland's Independence. I look forward to a time where we have collaborative industrial relations where the workers are paid properly for the work they do and it's clear that this will never happen in the UK, either under a Tory or now increasingly clearly under a Labour government.

On a personal note, I was delighted to accept a position on the SNP front bench as the Shadow Spokesperson on Levelling Up. I would like to thank Ian Blackford for his leadership of the Westminster group over the past 5 years and am excited by the prospects the new dynamic of Stephen Flynn as our Group Leader brings. Since the Supreme Court Ruling (see my other piece) it is plain that we are now prisoners of an involuntary union and a shake up of our benches in Westminster primes us for action.

Finally, I would like to thank my team for all the hard work they do and have done this past year. They are without doubt the best constituency team not only in Scotland but across the whole UK.

So Merry Christmas to you all, and a happy New Year. And no, I'm not making predictions.



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Committee Work

During all of 2022 I have continued my role as the SNP representative on the House of Commons Select Committee covering the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The role of those committees is to carry out a range of investigations and to scrutinise the work of the Department, then to present a Report to the UK Government, usually making policy recommendations. The DWP is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy, so here is a flavour of some of the work I have carried out:

Pensions have been a major concern this year – most recently with the threat to pension funds created by the disastrous mini-budget in September, which put some pension funds on the brink of collapse. I have asked how we can ensure that the Government has proper scrutiny of these in the future to avoid any repeats. Given recent events,

we have also been inquiring into the causes of – and solutions to – the Cost of Living Crisis. The Committee met six times to discuss how people nearing retirement could get the best pension advice, and how to ensure that those starting on their careers would get the pension they needed later in life.

We started the year by discussion Universal Credit and Childcare Costs, and recently moved onto the tricky subject of moving people on to UC from older benefit systems – something which the Government has to get right or many people will suffer financially. In discussing Child Poverty and the Child Maintenance Service with experts, we were told that children from lone-parent families were twice as likely to be in poverty than those from two-parent families. I expect the committee to make some strong recommendations on this to the Government when its Report is

published next year.

The issue of Health comes up regularly in the Select Committee. We still have an issue of the health threats from asbestos, and we listened to the views of experts from around Europe on how best to deal with this. Many people will have heard of the terrible treatment of claimants who suffer health problems when they have been interviewed for benefits like PIP, so it was a pleasure for me to explain to the Committee how the new Scottish replacement for this – Adult Disability Payment – is so much more respectful of claimants and less stressful than the old system. Hopefully Westminster will listen and learn from the advances we are making in Scotland.

If you ever want to watch the DWP Select Committee in action then you can see a video of it at: www.parliamentlive.tv/Commons



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Affordable Food Projects

This year I have focused on the Tory-made cost of living crisis and helping my constituents who are being driven into poverty, both through my work in Westminster and Glasgow South West. We have wonderful pantries, larders and food banks in Greater Pollok and Govan, however, I identified that we had a lack of affordable food projects in Cardonald, Penilee, Corkehill and Mossbank with the sole option being the Glasgow South West Food Bank, who do fantastic work in the community, offering assistance to the people needing it most and I intend to continue to work with and support them. However, a stepping stone is needed for people to move from food banks with affordable food options to support them.

Throughout the year I have been working on food projects throughout the constituency that has been spearheaded by myself and local organisations. This includes the Threehills Larders, the new Threehills Community Supermarket which will be open early in the new year, our

new mobile larder, the first pit stop is the Linthouse Community Larder and a FoodBank Dispatch point, we are adding Nethercraigs in Corkehill at the start of the new year as well as the Cardonald Larder in Swinton Place. As the chair of Good Food Scotland Steering Group, I brought the organisations together to be able to provide these services.

The new mobile larder brings nutritious, affordable food into the heart of communities – tackling issues of both affordability and access. Here, customers can purchase food for a fraction of the usual price.

For the Cardonald Larder, Good Food Scotland is working in partnership with the Southside Housing Association, the new Cardonald Larder will aim to ease the strain of the cost of living crisis for people living in the area.

Members of the Larders pay a monthly fee of £1 and buy items based on a straightforward and easy-to-understand points system.

The money raised from members' purchases will go towards replenishing stock, which comes from major retailers

and food suppliers.

Stock includes fresh fruit and vegetables, meat (including halal), cheese, bread, frozen and tinned food.

Good Food Scotland and I are determined to help people stretch their budgets further, and avoid having to go without food, especially with the cost of living continuing to rise so rapidly.

Work is also well underway on the Threehills Community Supermarket in Nitshill, Threehills Supermarket will act as a hub for the community, providing an affordable supermarket, café and community resource facility. Threehills will be Scotland's first Community Supermarket.

Although all of these developments in the constituency are very positive, the incompetence of The Tory Government means that the cost of living crisis continues to grow. The Scottish Government continues to mitigate as much as it can, to address the cost of living pressures. This alone - though important - will not be enough to meet the unprecedented challenges we face.



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GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

Food Support – Glasgow South West

Opening Times
December 26th – January 6th
Tel: 07437 910115

Ibrox
Closed

Penilee
Our Lady & St George Church
December 27th
January 3rd
Tuesday 10:30am - 12:30pm

Linthouse
Linthouse Housing Association
December 27th
January 3rd
Tuesday 2pm - 4pm

Mosspark
Closed

Cardonald
Hillington Park Parish Church
December 30th
January 6th
Friday 10am - 12:45pm

foodbank
Glasgow SW
Registered charity number: SC045123
Part of the Trussell Trust Network

FESTIVE OPENING TIMES

Wednesday 21st December	10.30am – 3.00pm
Thursday 22nd December	10.30am – 3.00pm
Wednesday 28th December	Closed
Thursday 29th December	Closed
Wednesday 4th January	Closed
Thursday 5th January	12.00pm – 4.00pm
Wednesday 11th January	10.30am – 3.00pm
Thursday 12th January	10.30am – 3.00pm

THE GOVAN PANTRY

Christmas Opening Hours

Good Food Scotland

Threehills Larders.
Woodhead Road Larder -
Mon 19th 10am - 5pm
Thu 22nd 10am - 2pm
415 Nitshill Road -
Tues 20th 10 am - 1pm
Wed 21st 10am - 1pm
Reopens
Mon 9th Jan.

Kennishead Larder.
Opening hours
Tues 20th closed -
Wed 21st closed
Thur 22nd - 9am - 2pm
Reopens
Fri 6th Jan - 9am - 2pm

Linthouse Mobile Larder.
Opening hours
Thur 22nd - 10am - 1pm
Reopens Thur 5th Jan -
10am - 1pm
1 Cressy Street
G51 4RB



Crookston Community Group

Open as normal, Monday to Friday
10am till 3 pm throughout the
festive period.

48 & 56 Beltrees Road, Crookston
www.ccg.scot
0141 882 4333
info@myccg.co.uk

Pollok Pantry
Located at 25-27 Brockburn Road, G53 5BG.

Open 24th until 5 pm
Closed 25th – Reopen 9th Jan
Normal Days: Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays
10 am - 3 pm, Saturday 10 am - 2 pm



Emergency Contacts

SAFETY



Ambulance, Police, Fire-fighters

Emergency – 999

Non-emergencies – 101



NHS 24 – 111



womensaid.org.uk



Childline
0800 1111



www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
0808 2000 247 – Freephone, 24-hour Helpline

FLOODING



Scottish Water
Trusted to serve Scotland

Out of Hours Customer
Helpline, 0800 077 8778

COUNCIL ISSUES



Glasgow City Council Emergency Line: 0141 287 2000

Simon Community Scotland's street team 0800 027 7466. For new presentations of homelessness, Mon – Fri (9:00am – 4:45pm; 3:45pm on Fridays), please call Social Care Connect on 0141 287 0555

UTILITIES



0345 070 7373



0345 058 0002
(Mon to Fri, 9am – 5pm)
Emergency – 105



Gas Emergency
0800 111 999



National Power
Cut Helpline 105



0333 200 8899

GOVERNMENT



Department
for Work &
Pensions

0800 169 0310 (JSA ESA)
0800 328 9344 (UC)



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

0845 850 289

ANIMALS



03000 999 999



0800 917 2509

MENTAL HEALTH



116 123



0800 83 85 87



08000 28 22 33



0808 808 1677



0800 12 44 222



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For any other emergency cases in Glasgow South West contact:

[chrisstephens.scot](https://www.chrisstephens.scot)

 0141 883 0875

chris.stephens.mp@parliament.co.uk



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The supreme court verdict last month showed the people of Scotland the truth. We are not in a voluntary union.

However, we cannot be disheartened; instead, we must pledge to continue campaigning for independence and freedom. We will not be silenced.

The UK Government's created the cost of living crisis, the energy crisis, and the broken immigration and social security system. That is precisely why we should seek to be independent and not excuse for delaying. The right to choose our own future and destiny cannot be delayed in the hope that the Tory Government has the answers for the issues they created.

Instead, we must now articulate a vision of hope. A vision that will inspire not only yes voters from 2014 but a whole new generation of yes voters and those

who reluctantly voted no. We need to make a strong case for why decisions affecting Scots must be taken in Scotland. We need to show that there is a fundamental democratic deficit in remaining in the status quo as part of this damaging union.

The UK Government simply cannot continue denying democracy in Scotland. This is unsustainable and a dangerous path for Unionists to tread.

We must continue to be the champions and defenders of democracy.

In repeated elections both to the Scottish Parliament and to Westminster – in 2016, 2017, 2019 and most recently in May 2021 – people in Scotland have elected majorities of MSPs and MPs that support a referendum.

In May last year, 72 of the 129 MSPs were elected on manifestos that committed them to a referendum on Scottish independence during this Parliament.

Should the UK Government continue to deny the Scottish people their right to choose, we must seek an alternative path to secure our independence.

In early 2023, I will talk to constituents, yes groups and SNP members on how we go forward. And, we must go forward together.

I have no doubt that November's judgement will lead to a new determination that our nation decides our own path and demonstrates that the people of Scotland are best placed to make the decisions that affect the people of Scotland.

ChrisCast – Weekly Politics & Local News From a Glasgow MP

ChrisCast is our weekly podcast from Chris Stephens MP. What do you want to know about the work of an MP? Do you have a Community project you would like mentioned? You can send me your suggestions alistair.shaw@parliament.uk

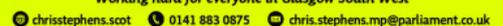
 chrisstephens.scot/podcast/

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Monthly Advice Surgeries

If you have a problem or require advice please contact my office to book an appointment at the surgery at the time and location which suits you best.

If you require help or advice out with surgery times please contact my office on **0141 883 0875** or email **chris.stephens.mp@parliament.uk** and we can arrange an appointment within the constituency office with one of my casework team.

To book an appointment call
0141 883 0875 or email
chris.stephens.mp@parliament.uk

Constituency Office

1612-1614 Paisley Road West
Glasgow G52 3QN
Open: Mon, Tues & Thur, Fri 9.30am-5pm
CLOSED Wednesday and weekends

First Thursday of the month

12.30 pm - 50p Church, Priesthill Rd G53 6QL

First Friday of the month

6.30 pm - Sainsbury's, 10 Darnley Mains Rd,
Glasgow G53 7RH

First Saturday of the month

10 am - Cardonald Library,
1113 Mosspark Drive G52 3BU

Second Friday of the month

11 am - Pearce Institute,
840-860 Govan Road G51 3UU

1 pm - Crookston Community Group,
56 Beltrees Road G53 5TF

Third Saturday of the month

10 am - Ibrox Library, 1 Midlock Street G51 1SL

12 noon - The Wedge,
1066 Barrhead Road G53 5AB

Fourth Friday of the month

12 noon - Corkerhill Community Hub
11 Corkerhill Place G52 1RD

2 pm - Riverside Hall,
29-31 Clydebrae Street G51 2AJ

Fourth Saturday of the month

12 noon - Tesco, Silverburn,
751 Barrhead Rd, Glasgow G53 6AG