



Chris Stephens MP

GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

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

February 2024



Parliamentary Work – February 2024

“It’s the same the whole world over. It’s the poor what gets the blame.
It’s the rich what gets the pleasure. Isn’t it a blooming shame?”

Those words were sung by soldiers in the trenches during World War I, and not much has changed since. My work at Westminster regularly seems to consist of looking after the underdog – whether locally in my constituency of Glasgow South West, or workers throughout Scotland, or internationally where defenceless people are under threat from the powerful.

Sometimes people who have been hard done by can get a break through the media drawing attention to their plight. A major recent example has been the TV series “Mr Bates vs The Post Office”, where the terrible treatment of subpostmasters was laid bare to the general public. Since the series concluded in the New Year, many politicians seems to have become hyperactive in demanding compensation for those who were wrongly bankrupted and jailed, and have pushed for action against the PO bosses who treated them so badly. Long before that series - in May last year - I asked the relevant Minister this question: “[On Post Office executives’ pay and bonuses](#), can he confirm that he is looking at docking them even further, on the basis that these executives signed off false accounts?” I think we may have a long wait until the real offenders are

properly dealt with. After all, “it’s the poor what gets the blame”.

The UK Government is now rushing to implement its new Strikes ([Minimum Service Levels](#)) Act, which I referred to in my last newsletter, and which I campaigned strongly against. This legislation does several things which run against the European norm regarding industrial relations. Scotland has long had an approach of voluntarily agreeing a ‘minimum service level’ when industrial action is taking place in an emergency service such as Fire and Rescue. This Act will now allow a Government Minister to dictate which individuals will need to cross picket lines and be compelled to carry duties forced on them under threat of criminal prosecution. This is not the way that Europe works. As members of a good European nation, Scottish Ministers will refuse to cooperate with the UK Government on this “appalling legislation”, saying that “The Scottish Government’s position is that a progressive approach to industrial relations, built on greater, not fewer, protections for workers, is at the heart of a fairer society and prosperous economy.”

Looking abroad, Scotland has a proud record of supporting oppressed

peoples and taking on those who do the oppressing. President Nelson Mandela came to Glasgow to receive the Freedom of the City after the fall of Apartheid in South Africa. Decades later, Scots are still outspoken in their condemnation of similar international outrages, including the suppression of the human rights of people such as the Palestinians. But Westminster is trying to silence us by using their ‘Antiboycott Act’. Officially known as the ‘Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill’, this is really just a gagging order – forced through the House of Commons while Gaza was being flattened in a one-sided ‘war’. I have led much of the debate on this at Westminster, pointing out that councils, universities and other institutions will no longer be allowed to invest solely in reputable and humane businesses abroad. The stated aim of this Act is to “...prevent public bodies from being influenced by political or moral disapproval of foreign states when taking certain economic decisions”. Truth is it’s not “the same the whole world over”; many other countries are influenced by morals. Like them, Scotland can be different. Scotland can be better.

Working hard for everyone in Glasgow South West

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GLASGOW SOUTH WEST



Infected Blood Scandal

Chris Stephens MP Condemns UK Government's Continued Failure to Compensate Victims of the Infected Blood Scandal

In recent weeks, I have continued to apply pressure on the UK Government to finally provide the overdue compensation to the victims of the contaminated blood scandal.

On January 17, I directly questioned the Prime Minister at PMQs on when the victims of this scandal will finally be paid compensation.

I said: "The Leader of the House last week correctly described the contaminated blood scandal as "on another level" compared with other scandals. Sir Brian Langstaff has announced today the publication of the final report of the infected blood inquiry, and he reminds us: "My principal recommendation remains that a compensation scheme should be set up with urgency. No-one should be in any doubt about the serious nature of the failings over more than six decades that have led to catastrophic loss of life and compounded suffering." More than 100 parliamentarians wrote to the Prime Minister this week, so can he tell us when those affected will be paid compensation for their loss?"

My question came following yet more damning revelations of governmental inaction, with victims of the infected blood scandal continuing to be denied justice and compensation, as highlighted by the delayed publication of the final report into the scandal.

Despite impassioned pleas from myself, many fellow MPs and campaigners, the UK government has yet to respond adequately to the plight of those affected.

The public inquiry chairman, Sir Brian Langstaff, acknowledged the gravity of the

situation, citing the need for additional time to prepare a comprehensive report. Initially slated for release in the autumn of last year, then postponed until March, the report's publication has been pushed back to May 20, 2024.

Expressing regret over the delay, Sir Brian emphasised the necessity of ensuring that the report thoroughly addresses the profound impact of the scandal on victims and their families. However, for the thousands who have suffered as a result of contaminated blood products in the 1970s and 1980s, each delay further prolongs their wait for justice.

Approximately 30,000 individuals were infected with HIV and hepatitis C, resulting in over 3,000 deaths—a tragedy described by MPs as the worst treatment disaster in NHS history. Despite the severity of the crisis, the Government's response has been inadequate, with compensation payments remaining unresolved.

In April 2023, Sir Brian proposed a comprehensive compensation scheme, recognising the urgent need to provide redress for those directly affected by the scandal. While the Government seems to acknowledge the moral imperative for compensation, it has yet to make final decisions on payouts, citing the necessity of reviewing the inquiry's findings.

Campaigners have decried the Government's sluggish response, emphasising the urgent need for action. Rachel Halford, chief executive of the Hepatitis C Trust, condemned

the latest delay as "extremely disappointing" for a community that has endured decades of injustice. Urging immediate establishment of a compensation scheme, Halford emphasised that time is of the essence, with lives hanging in the balance.

Cynics may argue that the Tories hope to push this issue beyond the General Election and land the incumbent next Government with the compensation payouts.

Yet political pressure has intensified and may prevent that from happening, with the Government facing scrutiny following a crucial defeat in the Commons in December 2023.

In the most important vote I have ever cast as an MP, SNP MPs' votes made the difference as the opposition parties successfully passed an amendment to expedite compensation payments, signalling growing impatience with the Government's inertia.

With the Victims and Prisoners Bill still under consideration in the House of Lords, the amendment, if enacted, would finally compel ministers to establish a payout scheme within three months of royal assent - a move that could finally provide much-needed relief for victims and their families.

As the Government grapples with mounting pressure and public outrage, the victims of the infected blood scandal continue to wait for the justice and compensation they deserve. With lives at stake, there is no room for further delay or evasion—the time for action is now.



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Linthouse Community Shop

If you've been following my role as the Chair of Good Food Scotland, you're likely aware of the impactful and affordable food projects I've been actively involved in. These initiatives are crafted to address the crucial issue of access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly in the face of ongoing challenges related to the cost of living. However, if you haven't had the chance to stay informed about these endeavours, allow me to provide you with an overview of some exciting new developments.

At the core of my efforts are community-based larders, serving as "wee shops" where individuals can become members for a nominal fee of just £1 per month. What makes these larders truly remarkable is their inclusivity; membership is open to everyone, regardless of employment or benefit status. As a member, individuals gain access to a diverse range of food essentials, encompassing household goods, fresh meat and dairy, frozen produce, cupboard staples, pet food, hygiene and feminine items, sweet treats, baby essentials, laundry products, and more.

In Glasgow South West, where the rising cost of living has significantly impacted the community, larders in Cardonald, Linthouse, and Nitshill have proven to be a lifeline for many. I am thrilled to share exciting plans on the

horizon, including the introduction of a mobile larder and the upcoming Threehills Community Supermarket, both of which are set to further serve and enrich our local community.

On a celebratory note, one of the mentioned larders - Linthouse Larder - recently marked its first anniversary at the end of last year. Linthouse Housing Association is playing a pivotal role by providing a fantastic new space known as the 'Linthouse Community Shop.' This space will not only host the larder but also include wrap-around services offering access to the Linthouse Housing Association team, debt advice and general support. The Community Shop will be situated at the old LUV Café site at 1121 Govan Road, Linthouse, with doors opening in early spring. Stay tuned for more details on their [facebook page](#).

My heartfelt gratitude goes out to Linthouse for their unwavering support. The current larder operates from the rear of the Linthouse Housing Association building at 1 Cressy Street, G51 4RB, every Thursday from 10 am until 1 pm. The new space has garnered substantial support from local businesses, with BAE Systems contributing to making this space a reality, even assisting with painting. It is indeed a fantastic new location filled with promising opportunities.

In Westminster, my commitment remains resolute as I continue to advocate

for concrete plans to eliminate the need for food banks by 2030. I am also dedicated to pushing for reforms related to Universal Credit deductions, which can be excessive, as well as sanctions and initiatives aimed at effectively addressing in-work poverty. These efforts reflect my unwavering dedication to creating a brighter, fairer, and more equitable future for all.

With the unwavering dedication of all those involved, I am confident that together, we can make a meaningful and lasting difference.



Good Food Scotland

LINTHOUSE COMMUNITY SHOP





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Rwanda...

Rwanda is a landlocked country which will now be forever associated with small boats. In what is possibly one of the most absurd pieces of legislation to come before Parliament since the [Metropolitan Streets Act of 186, part 1, section 7](#) preventing the walking of cows on the street between 10am and 7pm, Rishi Sunak's calamitous Conservatives are trying to hood wink the UK into believing that if the UK Government says Rwanda is safe, then Rwanda is safe. This is despite the UK providing asylum to 6 Rwandans between April 2022 and September 2023. What's next? A vote on 'Kim Jong-Un is a really nice chap once you get to know him'? It's at this point that we need to take a look at Rwanda and why, despite the obvious abuses of Human rights by the UK Government including the [right to claim asylum](#), Rwanda is a difficult choice as a safe haven.

A bit of history first. Like a lot of the world hunter gatherers coalesced into clans and kingdoms that came and went, much like Scotland in fact. As with so many stories eventually the colonial imperialist era arrived and with it arbitrary borders were drawn by the Western powers to divide up Africa between the British, French, Germans and Portuguese with a little bit of Dutch in the area we now know as South Africa. Those arbitrary colonial borders now cause conflict around the world.

Imperial powers Belgium and Germany

supported a pro Tutsi arrangement until 1959 and a pro Hutu regime took power in 1962 until a Tutsi uprising in 1990 supported by Uganda (important later). Then came the genocide between April and July 1994 where Hutu militias are estimated to have massacred up to around 1 million predominantly Tutsi, all triggered by the assassination of the pro Hutu President Habyarimana. Eventually the Hutu militias and their leaders were forced to escape to The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

So we establish a pattern. Regular and violent upheaval from time to time. As we will now see this area is on a hair trigger.

An asylum seeker from Uganda contacted my office to bring to my attention a massacre perpetrated by what he believes [the M23 group](#) supported by Rwandan soldiers where several thousand DRC residents were rounded up and executed.

Of course, while this is not something that I can corroborate, it does leave questions and ones that I do not feel have been addressed by the UK Government. It also further demonstrates that the possibility of further upheaval in the coming years is not beyond the realms of possibility.

While meeting my constituent was a real eye opener - did really need my constituent to raise concerns with me to demonstrate Rwanda was not a safe

country? No. We only need to look at the supreme court rulings.

Yes a ruling of the court can only be enhanced by sitting listening to the real life stories of a Tutsi refugee who fled to Uganda for fear in Rwanda all those years ago.

This cruel Westminster Bill, which ignores the Supreme Court ruling and breaches international law, was not passed in Scotland's name.

It in no way reflects Scotland's values of compassion, humanity and upholding international law. Nor does it take into account that migration benefits Scotland's economy and our public services.

That is why SNP MPs voted against it and tabled an amendment to try to stop the Bill in its tracks.

It is depressing that as the Westminster cost of living crisis continues, and people across these isles struggle to put food on the table and heat their homes, the Westminster government has spent days fighting amongst themselves on a Bill that will punish those fleeing to the UK from war and persecution, at great expense to UK taxpayers.

Westminster doesn't work for Scotland, and it doesn't understand our priorities. Decisions that impact Scotland should be made in Scotland, by those who live in Scotland.



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SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS



Govan Youth Information Project (GYIP)

I take immense pride in highlighting and celebrating the Govan Youth Information Project (GYIP), a fantastic nonprofit organisation making a significant impact in the Glasgow Govan area and beyond. GYIP stands out for its unwavering dedication to delivering transformative youth work, emphasising support, information, and advice for all children and young people.

At the heart of GYIP's mission is a steadfast commitment to community development and regeneration, embodying the spirit of positive change. By fostering an environment that empowers individuals from diverse backgrounds, GYIP has become a beacon of hope and opportunity for the youth in the constituency.

The organisation focuses on individuals aged 5-25 and reflects a keen

understanding of the formative years and the crucial role they play in shaping a community's future. GYIP goes beyond conventional approaches, adopting an informal and accessible education model. This approach ensures that vital topics, including employment, health and wellbeing, substance misuse, first aid, and equality and diversity, are covered comprehensively.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to GYIP for its tireless commitment to providing clear, factual understanding to young individuals in Govan and beyond. By doing so, GYIP not only contributes to positive individual outcomes but also plays a pivotal role in fostering a sense of community engagement and collective responsibility.

I want to acknowledge the organisation's role as a driving force

for positive change in the constituency. GYIP's impact extends beyond educational realms, creating a ripple effect that enhances the overall wellbeing and prospects of the community it serves. The organisation stands as a testament to the power of community-driven initiatives and the transformative potential that arises when dedicated individuals come together for a common cause.

gyip.org.uk

Tel: 0141 445 4505

Email: mail@gyip.org.uk

Address:

9 Water Row
Govan Cross,
Glasgow
G51 3UW

Govan Youth Information Project / Scottish
Charity registration no. SC030358



Chris Stephens MP

GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

OUT AND ABOUT IN

Glasgow South West & Westminster

I am thrilled to share the latest updates on my recent endeavors, both within Westminster and amidst the vibrant communities of Glasgow South West.

In the heart of Westminster, I've had the privilege of addressing a multitude of pressing issues. From contaminated blood to the post office horizon scandal, Gaza to public sector pay, and human rights legislation to name but a few, my aim remains steadfast: representing the voices of not only my Glasgow South West constituents but also workers throughout Scotland and internationally, especially when defenseless people are under threat from the powerful.

Venturing beyond the parliamentary walls, my commitment to engaging with constituents is unwavering. I've personally taken the time to listen to concerns right at doorsteps, gaining invaluable insights into the daily challenges you face and addressing these through the relevant authorities. Moreover, I've had the privilege of visiting various organisations within Glasgow South West, witnessing first-hand the outstanding work being done throughout Glasgow South West.

As the next Westminster election looms on the horizon, both myself and a team of dedicated activists have been tirelessly knocking on doors, reaching out to constituents across the new and old Glasgow South West boundary. Your input is invaluable, and our interactions at your doorstep help shape my priorities.

But that's not all—weekly surgeries throughout the constituency remain a cornerstone of my commitment to open communication. These sessions provide a platform for one-on-one discussions, ensuring that your voices continue to be heard loud and clear.

Rest assured, there's much more in the pipeline. I am dedicated to working tirelessly on your behalf and championing the causes that matter most. Together, we can build a brighter and more inclusive future for everyone throughout Glasgow South West.

Stay tuned for further updates, and thank you for entrusting me with the privilege of representing you since 2015.



Potential In Me



Pollok United Soccer Academy Christmas fair



Contaminated Blood



Campaign Team



Greater Pollok Walkabout Event



Submitting the petition to Lloyds Banking Group



Cardonald Larder.



Greater Pollok Walkabout Event



Darnley joint Surgery with Cllr Roza Salih



Linthouse Larder



Pollok Baptist Church cafe



Riverside Hall Surgery



Linthouse Larder



Corkerhill Community Hub, Surgery



Joint Surgery with Cllr Roza Salih, Tesco - Pollok



Bella Fresca, Cardonald



Galgael Christmas Fayre



Crookston Surgery



Scottish Dental Care, Cardonald



Tea in the Pot - Govan



Pearce Institute Surgery



The Wedge Surgery



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GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

Food Support – Glasgow South West



Important - The foodbank works using a voucher referral system. In order to get help from the foodbank, you will need a voucher issued by [local agencies](#), including my office at 1612-1614 Paisley Road West, Glasgow G52 3QN.

Penilee

Our Lady & St George Church
50 Sandwood Road, G52 2QE
Tue 10:30 - 12:30

Cardonald

Hillington Park Church
24 Berryknowes Rd, G52 2UD
Fri 10:00 - 12:45

Cardonald

Hillington Park Church
24 Berryknowes Rd, G52 2UD
Fri 10:00 - 12:45

Priesthill

Priesthill Community Hall
(50p Church)
Thur 10:00 - 12:00



Nutritious low cost food and support to local people.

Linthouse

Linthouse Housing Association
1 Cressy Street, Glasgow G51 4RB
Thur 10:00 - 13:00

Cardonald

12 Swinton Place, Cardonald, G52 2EA
Tue 10:00 - 13:00
Thur 15:00 - 18:00

Threehills larder

415 Nitshill Road (Entrance at the side of the block of high rise flats.)
Tue 10:30 - 13:00
Wed 10:30 - 13:00

Kennishead

60 Kennishead Ave,
Glasgow G46 8RN
Tues 10:00 - 13:00
Fri 10:00 - 13:00

goodfoodscotland.org

Crookston Community Group



48 & 56 Beltrees Road, Crookston
www.ccg.scot 0141 882 4333
Monday to Friday 10:00 - 15:00

St Constantine's Hall, Uist St - Opposite Church

Uist St, Govan G51 3XW
Saturday 6 - 7PM FREE Food Parcel pickup.
10 items per bag. Drop-in, no referral required.

Govan

The Pearce Institute, 840-860 Govan Road, entrance at the war memorial side.

Wednesday 10.30 to 15:00
Thursday 10.30 to 15:00



Pollok Pantry

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

Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays
10.00 - 15:00, Saturday 10:00 - 14:00

Get help with the cost of living

If you don't have enough money to live on, you might be able to get help to afford essentials like bills and food. This includes the Scottish Welfare Fund and cost of living payments.

You should [check](#) if you can claim benefits - you might be able to do this even if you have a job.

Telephone: 0141 881 2462

www.cas.org.uk/bureaux/glasgow-greater-pollok-citizens-advice-bureau



Emergency Contacts

SAFETY



Ambulance, Police, Firefighters

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



0800 092 9290



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



**Gas Emergency
0800 111 999**



**National Power
Cut Helpline 105**



**British Gas
0800 111 999**

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



Chris Stephens MP

GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

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

 christephens.scot/podcast/



Newsletter

Our regular newsletter from Chris Stephens MP is available to download from our website, or you can sign up for our newsletter. The newsletter will inform you of what I have been doing in the Glasgow South West Constituency and in Westminster.

 christephens.scot/#newsletter

 christephens.scot/newsletter-2/



Constituency Work in Nov 23 to Jan 24



CASES OPENED 1,820



EMAILS RECEIVED 3,704








CASES CLOSED 1,944



EMAILS SENT 3,383

Working hard for everyone in Glasgow South West

    christephens.scot  0141 883 0875  chris.stephens.mp@parliament.co.uk



Chris Stephens MP

GLASGOW SOUTH WEST

Monthly Advice Surgeries



First Thursday of the month

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

First Friday of the month

6.30 pm – Sainsbury's Darnley, 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

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.

Constituency Office

1612-1614 Paisley Road West
Glasgow G52 3QN

Open: Mon, Tues & Thur, Fri 9.30am-5pm
CLOSED Wednesday and weekends



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