

# Report

**Proposer:** MSPs (decided on: 09/14/2020)

**Title:** Report: MSPs

## Report

**Alison Johnstone**

It's fair to say that the past year has been a challenging one. In the midst of the climate emergency and the mass extinction of species, we find ourselves tackling the impact of a global pandemic that has exposed entrenched inequality and the failure of an economic model that assumes an endless supply of planetary resources. The pandemic has devastated the lives and livelihoods of many of our constituents in Lothian and beyond and there has been a marked increase in correspondence from people seeking advice and support on a wide range of pressing issues.

As Co-Leader of the Parliamentary Group I have scrutinised the Government's response to Covid-19, working with colleagues, clinicians and public health experts to ensure public health measures are appropriate and timely. I sought to amend the Coronavirus legislation to improve support for carers, reaching agreement with the Government, and was defeated in my efforts to make the birth control pill available, free of charge, at pharmacies during the pandemic. I have used my opportunity at First Minister's Questions to raise a wide range of issues including the pandemic, the treatment of asylum seekers, wildlife persecution, transport, austerity and more.

My work in Lothian has involved meeting and supporting various local groups, organisations and individuals including Gorgie Farm who fought against closure with a well-supported local campaign involving Green Councillors and MSPs. I met with local residents in Liberton concerned at the gradual erosion of local open space to development pressures, accompanied by our local branch representative,

visiting sites enjoyed by many. I met young apprentices in Edinburgh's nurseries, visited the Cyrenians Fare Share project and helped local volunteers clean our city's beaches.

I have spoken at several Youth Climate Strikes, represented the Party at conferences including the Poverty Alliance Conference, the Nourish Scotland Conference, Scottish Women Stand and the inaugural Revive Conference. I took forward my Members Bill proposal to properly ban fox hunting in Scotland and make the mountain hare a protected species. I took advantage of the legislative opportunity afforded by the Government's Animals and Wildlife Bill and achieved the latter with overwhelming public support. As part of our budget negotiations this year, the Green MSP group achieved free bus travel for Under 19s. While the pandemic has impacted this delivery, this marks another concrete result due to our pragmatic engagement with the Scottish budget process.

#### **Andy Wightman**

The 14 months since the 2019 AGM have continued to be dominated by external events including a General Election, the ongoing Brexit debacle and, latterly the global coronavirus pandemic. Our work in Parliament has been disrupted in recent months by the pandemic but it has been a busy year, nevertheless.

As MSPs, we try to get out and about as much as possible and highlights of the past year have included a visit to the South of Scotland Golden Eagle project (as Scottish Parliament's 'golden Eagle species champion), a visit with Ross Greer MSP to the HarburnHead Wind Farm in West Lothian with representatives of the Lothian Pension Fund, and filming for a BBC travelogue with Frankie Boyle to discuss how Scotland's land is owned.

Constituency work has been wide and varied including the usual health, housing and social security issues as well as casework that has led to wider campaigns such as my representing constituent Colin Brown in the Housing Tribunal and working on a human rights challenge to private renting law.

I have been involved in a wide range of legislation in Parliament including the Period Products Bill, Heat Networks Bill, Scottish National Investment Bank bill and Non-Domestic Rates Bill. In the latter, we made a determined (but unsuccessful) effort to repatriate non-domestic rates to local authorities. More recently, I have been campaigning strenuously for more protection for private renters through the two emergency Coronavirus Bills.

Wider work has included working with residents and professionals to resolve

61 issues related to suspect cladding on residential buildings, ongoing work on the  
62 Homes First campaign along with Edinburgh Councillors and continuing efforts to  
63 eradicate wildlife crime and ban driven grouse shooting. On 5 May 2020, I  
64 introduced my Members Bill (European Charter of Local Self-Government  
65 (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill) to Parliament and Stage One scrutiny is  
66 underway.