

Report

Proposer: Lorna Slater MSP (decided on: 06/20/2022)

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Report

The past year has been a new challenge for my team and me, as I was first elected to parliament and then made a Scottish Government minister in a short period of time. Each month I write a report for the branch which summarises my work and updates with my office you can find them here:

<https://www.edinburghgreens.org.uk/msp-and-councillor-reports/>

- **July/ August 2021**

Most of the month was spent in cooperation talks with the Scottish Government. We hosted a number of events that were open to party members and have continued to do so in the months that have followed. One of the benefits of being a global movement is that it allowed us to have constructive talks with our friends from the New Zealand Greens and other Green parties from around the world, who were keen to share their experiences of being in government.

- **September 2021**

I was appointed as Scotland's first ever Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity following the historic vote within our party to enter government at the EGM. This month included a lot of meetings with stakeholders across the government and industry that helped me to understand the structures of government and further my understanding of my portfolio.

19 • **October 2021**

20 In my Ministerial capacity I announced a review into incineration, which has
21 since reported back and recommended an end to planning permission for new
22 incinerators in Scotland. I will be responding to the report on behalf of the
23 Scottish Government in the weeks ahead, but it was a very rigorous piece of work
24 and one I was proud to commission.

25 I met with the then Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development,
26 Jenny Gilruth, to discuss how we can improve the accessibility and nature of
27 Holyrood Park. This followed meetings with constituents, car-free campaigners
28 and our fantastic Edinburgh councillors who have been pushing for improvements
29 to be made. This meeting has resulted in a longer engagement with Historic
30 Environment Trust, which I hope to update the branch about in the months ahead.

31 • **November/ December 2021**

32 I was very proud to announce the Scottish Government's plan for transforming
33 gender identity services. This laid out our plans to put trans people at the
34 heart of decisions about their healthcare while reducing waiting times to bring
35 them in line with national standards.

36 Although a positive COVID test meant that I was unable to attend the first week
37 of COP events in person, I did get the chance to visit stalls and exhibitions in
38 the "blue zone". I gave a speech at the WWF event and met people who are working
39 hard to protect animals and their inhabitants around the world.

40 In my role as a Minister, I was delighted to announce a £55 million nature
41 restoration fund to tackle biodiversity loss and rewild our green spaces. I got
42 the opportunity to meet with a lot of interesting people during COP at the Green
43 Hub which the Party organised in Glasgow. While there, I met with fellow Green
44 Ministers from around the world, activists from countries on the front line of
45 Climate Change and so many other amazing people.

46 I also visited Linlithgow and Dunbar to meet with local candidates and discuss
47 their campaigns for the local elections.

48 • **January 2022**

I was proud to announce a £12.5 million investment to protect our species, woodlands, rivers and seas. This builds on a £5 million fund that we launched in November and is part of the biggest investment in nature restoration that any Scottish Government has ever made.

We committed to funding 54 projects across the country, from cities to towns and villages. This includes support for the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust to improve biodiversity in Edinburgh's urban parks and for Edinburgh City Council to build a coastal meadow network.

I was also delighted to see the introduction of free bus travel for everyone aged 21 or under, this was a key part of the cooperation agreement that we negotiated with the Scottish Government.

- **February 2022**

I joined and spoke at protests outside Parliament and the Russian Consulate. Unfortunately the powers of the Scottish Parliament are very limited, but I worked with the Scottish Government as well as my Green MSP colleagues and councillors to call for visa restrictions to be lifted and ensure that Scotland did as much as we could.

As part of the Bute House agreement, the Scottish Government published the Gender Recognition Act reform. This will allow self-identification for trans people and will remove some of the bureaucracy and trauma from the existing system.

- **March 2022**

In my Ministerial role, I launched the Scottish Government's new anti-food waste campaign. This was launched at the Ripple in Restalrig, a community organisation that provides vital services to some of the most deprived communities in our city.

I was also very proud to announce the steps that we are taking to ban the destruction of unsold goods and make sure they make it into the hands of those that need them. This will be part of the Circular Economy Bill that I will be taking through Parliament.

March also marked six months since we entered government. It was a good time to reflect on what we have achieved in that time. It has been a busy time, with free bus travel for everyone under 22, a record investment in active travel and biodiversity, £145 million for additional teachers and support staff, the doubling of the Scottish child payment, and a ban on many of the worst single-use plastics. I am also hopeful about the longer-term changes we are delivering, including GRA reform and better rights for tenants, including rent controls.

- **April/ May/ June 2022**

Over the election period I spent time campaigning with target candidates across the region and nationally. It was great to see so many new faces elected as Green councillors in the Lothian region, taking our Edinburgh Councillor group to 10 and the addition of the Scottish Greens first ever councillor in East Lothian Council. We saw growth in West Lothian as well despite falling short in Linlithgow.

I was delighted to see so many Young Greens and women elected into our Edinburgh group. I look forward to spending the next 5 years working with them to make the Lothian region fairer and greener. I have already met with some of our new councillors and have plans to meet them all as a group regularly in weeks and months to come.

- **Looking ahead**

Over the next few months my team and I are going to be working with branches on local projects to push forward the Green agenda and increase recognition of the party within communities. In West Lothian we will be working to clean up Linlithgow Loch. East Lothian we will be campaigning for a nature based flood defence rather than the proposed concrete option and in Edinburgh we will continue our work on Holyrood Park.

The months ahead will be very busy for my ministerial portfolio with the conciliation for the Circular Economy Bill, more beaver translocations, the Biodiversity Strategy to be published in the autumn and the further progress towards naming Scotland's next national park. You can keep up to date with my work on social media or in my monthly reports to branches.