

eBrief from Cathy Jamieson MP



23rd January 2012

Unemployment now at “crisis” level



I have once again called on the Government to change course following the [news](#) that

unemployment has risen in Kilmarnock and Loudoun for the third month running. New figures show long term youth unemployment is up 29%, and the over 50s are increasingly suffering, with 37% more people in Kilmarnock and Loudoun on benefits for over six months since January 2011. The figures also show that Scotland is faring worse than the rest of the UK with nearly a quarter of a million Scots now out of work. When I questioned David Cameron about rising unemployment in November he admitted that the number of people out of work was too high and that it he wanted to see it come down. Yet two months later the numbers have risen even further and only confirm what local families in Kilmarnock and Loudoun already know – we are in the grip of an unemployment crisis.

It was disappointing to hear that retail chain Peacocks has gone in to administration. Hopefully a buyer can be found, and the Kilmarnock jobs protected. I have spoken to my Shadow Treasury colleague Owen Smith MP, in whose constituency the company HQ is located, and he is keeping me updated on the latest [developments](#).

I was also in touch again with [Unite the Union](#) regarding Mahle, ahead of the workforce mass meeting on Saturday. I hope that the company will be prepared to get back round the table for further talks.

Big Energy Week in Parliament

Despite some reductions ahead in the cost of fuel bills, sky high are prices are stretching household budgets. Big Energy Week, run by Citizens Advice, was launched in Parliament to help people get practical advice on cutting their fuel bills and understand all of the financial support they can receive. A new website (www.bigenergyweek.org.uk) has tips on how to cut energy bills.

I met Gillian Guy, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice to discuss the problems people are facing. She highlighted that some people are struggling unnecessarily because they're not on the best deal, live in homes that haemorrhage heat, or are not getting all of the financial help available to them.



Amnesty Campaign Success

Regular readers may recall that I supported the Amnesty International campaign to have political prisoners in Burma released. I was particularly keen to highlight the case of [Mie](#)



[Mie](#), and I was delighted to hear the news from Amnesty International that she has been freed, bringing the total number of

political prisoners released to at least 477. But the [campaign](#) continues for the release of over 1000 still behind bars.

Pennants plea for Olympics



Can you help with a project to give a warm welcome to the world's Olympic and Paralympic athletes when they arrive in the UK later this year? The Quilts4London project plans to give each Olympic and Paralympic athlete a hand-made pennant to take home with them.

The project has already received – or been promised - 11,000 pennants, but they need another 3,000 to meet the target of 14,700. Project Leader Catherine Hill told MPs that if every school round the country made just one pennant to represent their school, they would meet their target. They have already had pennants from a wide range of organisations, including sports clubs, needlework groups and, numerous individuals. The closing date is 15th February and the pennants will be exhibited around the country in the lead up to the games. For more information visit www.quilts4london.org.uk or <http://quilts4london.typepad.com/blog/> or get in touch with me if you can help.

Mauchline Burns Plaques unveiled

Burns enthusiasts braved the weather to join members of [Mauchline Burns Club](#) for their latest project. A series of blue tourist plaques are now in place around the village, and in the kirkyard, showing the local spots associated with Burns.



Once again Mauchline Burns Club has shown how to get things done – I hope the sun will shine for the next tourist group!

Say Aye to the Vegan Killie Pie!

Football fans across the UK recognise the famous Killie Pie as top of the league. But what about those of us who love our football but don't eat meat? With the Cup Semi Final coming up at the weekend, I was delighted when Killie Pie baker John Gall of Brownings rose to the challenge to create what is surely the world's first vegan football pie!



I dropped by the bakery to sample this delicacy – a vegan piecrust filled with chick peas and roasted vegetables flavoured with balsamic vinegar. A big thanks to John and his colleague Matthew Short (who just happens to support another team...) for being such good sports!

Next Drop In Surgery

Friday 27 Jan 10 am Dunlop Village Hall

For future dates see

<http://www.cathyjamieson.com/local-surgeries>

You can also use my esurgery form

<http://www.cathyjamieson.com/esurgery>

or call 01563 522361 for an appointment

Thanks to everyone who got in touch looking to meet up with me in the February recess. The diary is filling up quickly, so if you want to meet with me to discuss local or national issues, please contact me as soon as possible.