

Jeremy Purvis MSP

Working all year round for you as Member of the Scottish Parliament for Tweeddale, Ettrick & Lauderdale

Making the difference for constituents in the Borders and Penicuik



The Scottish Parliament

Dear Resident,

In this, my first annual report since my election as your Member of the Scottish Parliament, I hope to give you a flavour of what I have been doing on your behalf in the last year.

Much political debate over the last twelve months has been dominated by events in the Middle East and the aftermath of war.

Closer to home, my top priority in the constituency is to represent all the residents of Tweeddale, Ettrick & Lauderdale, both in the constituency and at Holyrood, and my post-bag over the last year has resulted in over six hundred individual cases being raised on a wide variety of issues, ranging from the uncertainty of the future of maternity services, law and order, health service waiting times, schooling, transport and roads and housing. I hope that I have been of assistance to the many hundreds of people that have been in touch with me.

On the back page of this report is a handy reminder of how to get in touch with me and important local information. This report is available in large print and audio also and on my website, www.jeremypurvis.org.

I always try to make myself as accessible as possible to my constituents and keep people up to date with my work. I hope this annual report will help achieve these aims, as part of my year round work on your behalf.

Jeremy Purvis MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Tweeddale, Ettrick & Lauderdale

Parliamentary Report



IT IS A YEAR SINCE JEREMY PURVIS WAS ELECTED. HERE IS A BRIEF HIGHLIGHT OF WHAT HE HAS DONE ON YOUR BEHALF

- Jeremy has held over 70 advice surgeries around the constituency
- He has dealt with over 600 individual cases, and responded to hundreds more enquiries
- Has travelled more than 12,000 miles in journeys within the constituency alone
- Has spoken to and met with school groups, community groups, community councils, pensioner meetings, business forums etc
- He has attended all the local common riding festivals
- He has been a leader in the campaign for the Borders Railway
- He has spoken extensively in the Parliament on Borders and Penicuik issues, and is one of the most active of all parliamentarians
- Held regular meetings with Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Enterprise Borders, Lothian & Borders Police and NHS Borders to raise issues for constituents
- Worked successfully to retain Peebles Sheriff Court in Peebleshire
- Helped persuade the Scottish Executive to reduce water charges for small businesses
- Campaigned rigorously to ensure continued funding for local voluntary bodies



The Scottish Parliament

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH - DIRECTORY

There are special leaflets available from Jeremy on the work of MSPs and how he works on your behalf in the Scottish Parliament and the powers of the Parliament, you can get these by telephoning the Parliamentary Office on 01896 663656. This information is correct at time of going to press.

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Galashiels TD1 1NZ

Michael Moore MP

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Galashiels TD1 1NZ
Tel 01896 663650
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E-mail michaelmooremp@parliament.uk
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The Scottish Parliament

Edinburgh EH99 1SP
Tel 0131 348 5000
www.scottish.parliament.uk

The House of Commons

London SW1A 0AA
Tel 020 7219 3000
www.parliament.uk

The Scottish Executive

The Scottish Executive carries out regular consultations in advance of policy announcements or proposals for legislation. Please visit www.scotland.gov.uk

Scottish Borders Council

Newtown St Boswells
Melrose TD6 0SA
Tel 01835 824 000
www.scotborders.gov.uk

Information on Council Tax

Berwickshire Tel 01361 886138
Ettrick & Lauderdale 01896 662719
Tweeddale 01721 726322
Midlothian Council
<http://revenues.scotborders.gov.uk>

Non domestic rates

Non Domestic Rates Team
Paton Street
Galashiels TD1 3AS
Tel 0845 3000341

Independent financial advice

Welfare Benefits Service
East End
Earlston TD4 6HU
Tel 01896 849802

Money Advice Service

(Trading Standards)
St Dunstons High Street
Melrose TD6 9RU
Tel 01896 823922

Midlothian Council

Council Headquarters
Dalkeith
Tel 0131 270 7500

Borders Independent Advocacy Service (BIAS)

Tel 01573 225777

Penumbra Youth Project

Tel 01896 751177

Disabled Person's Housing Service

Tel 01896 755377

Borders Disability Forum

Tel 01896 668578

Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice Bureau offer free, confidential advice, information and practical help to everyone on a wide range of issues and problems, including welfare benefits, debt, employment, housing, consumer rights and relationships.
Galashiels Tel 01896 753889
Peebles Tel 01721 721722
Penicuik Tel 01968 675259

NHS Borders

Tel 01896 825500

NHS Lothian

Tel 0131 536 9000

Lothian & Borders Police

Tel 0131 311 3131

Lothian & Borders Fire Brigade

Tel 0131 228 2401

Volunteering First Midlothian

Tel 0131 663 6165

Penicuik Health Centre

Tel 01968 672 612

Large print, electronic & audio versions of this report are available by calling **01896 663656**

If you would like further copies please e-mail sheila.souness@scottish.parliament.uk



DESIGNED BY HCD/STP INNSBRITTEN

Jeremy at the control room of Lothian & Borders Police in the Borders when he went out on a night shift with officers



Supporting Tweed Valley Mountain Rescue Team by being a stretcher bearer



ACTION ON TV RECEPTION

Purvis meets minister to push for better TV reception

The lack of reliable TV reception and the denial of terrestrial digital television for many residents in his constituency is unacceptable, says Jeremy and he has been working hard to campaign for better services.

Jeremy has been working closely with Michael Moore MP who has raised the issue with the Director General of the BBC and ministers. He commented:

"This is a vexed issue and affects many parts of the Borders. The UK government has made some moves after pressure from colleagues but there is still more they can do to ensure a universal coverage."

Jeremy Purvis added:

"I am pleased that the Executive recognises this is an important issue for many rural communities and has agreed to meet me. There are many ways where I believe this could be progressed if the Executive takes a more aggressive approach in ensuring that all licence fee payers receive a reliable and equitable TV service."

Jeremy commented:

"I have received many complaints from constituents who are frustrated about the lack of reliable analogue reception for terrestrial telly and about the lack of alternatives, which goes to the nub of the issue. Much of the subject is reserved to Westminster and I have worked closely with my Westminster colleague Michael Moore to press broadcasters and the Government on the importance of ensuring real free-to-air services from the BBC and ITV to the areas that can receive them only through satellite broadcasting.

In correspondence with Michael, Greg Dyke-the BBC's director-general-argued that since moving its digital services to a new satellite in July this year, the BBC has saved £85 million. He told Mr Moore:

"In the interests of all licence payers, the funds released will pay for the production of new programmes, and also enable viewers to see all BBC regional services by satellite wherever they live in the UK."

The concern is that because many viewers have been left high and dry by Sky Television's recent decision to replace all existing encryption cards and because the BBC no longer has an obligation to subsidise the provision of the Solus card. This means that people in some of Scotland's remotest areas are discriminated against."

PURVIS TAKES A LEADING ROLE ON HOUSING IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Jeremy is one of the most active MSPs in campaigning for better housing and more houses for rent in the Borders.

His consistent work has been recognised publicly and he has put constant pressure on the Scottish Executive for a more robust planning and housing policy and he overlooked the Executive's review of both planning and social housing to last until the end of the summer 2004.

Jeremy commented: "It was an honour to open a very well designed and managed Eildon development last year and I made sure that the Housing Minister met with all Borders housing associations to discuss the need to address the shortage of affordable houses and houses for rent. This was the first time the Minister visited the Borders on this issue.

I also hosted a meeting in Penicuik attended by the local councillors and housing associations and I would like to see real progress in the town to increase the supply of houses to rent. I will be putting forward radical proposals to the Executives reviews. Please get in touch on the issues of most concern to you."

ACTION THAT HAS RETAINED SHERIFF COURT SERVICES IN PEEBLES

Jeremy's long campaign of parliamentary questions, meetings with the Justice Minister and Council brings success

The months of lobbying of the Scottish Executive by Jeremy Purvis MSP has been successful in retaining sheriff court services in Peebles. The co-located services of justice and social work will be delivered from the Rosetta Road building with the Court Service and the Council working closely together to offer integrated services.

The Rosetta Road scheme has been described as 'unique' and with the potential of police services and other youth justice facilities all integrated a pioneering model can be developed in Tweeddale, bringing benefits to the local community.



Jeremy after hosting his meeting with local community representatives at Rosetta Road, Peebles

PENSIONS AGENCY RELOCATION TO GALASHIELS RECOGNISED AS SUCCESS BY PARLIAMENT

Jeremy commented, "I am very pleased that the Rosetta Road scheme is going ahead and that we have turned around the threat that no justice services would be available in Tweeddale to one where we will have a pioneering facility where a number of services linked to justice in the community can be offered more effectively."

The retention of Peebles Sheriff Court was a major campaign priority for Jeremy in the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2003 and the retention is a major success. He started work straight away to build on the work of Ian Jenkins, the former MSP for Tweeddale, Ettrick & Lauderdale, holding 5 meetings with Scottish Borders Council, 3 meetings with the Minister for Justice and undertook substantial behind the scenes work with civil servants. When he was assured that agreement had been reached with Scottish Borders Council and the Court Service he convened and chaired a meeting in Peebles in February with the Chief Executive of Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Courts Service, Community Council representative and local councillors.

The meeting was also attended by police chiefs, members of Scottish Borders Council social work and youth justice teams as well as the local procurator fiscal and solicitors. The meeting discussed how the co-located services will operate in practice and the potential for even more services being delivered from Rosetta Road. Justice in the community is very important and Jeremy he will continue to take a leading role in ensuring the co-location scheme is supported.

The relocation of the Scottish Pensions Agency to Tweedbank has been used as a benchmark against which other government relocations should be judged by the Parliament's Finance Committee.

The Pensions Agency was relocated to Tweedbank as one of the first dispersal of government jobs as part of the Scottish Executive policy.

Jeremy, who sits on the Committee, said: "I am delighted that after the work of my predecessor Ian Jenkins and Jim Wallace, as well as Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Enterprise Borders, the relocation of the agency has shown how the relocation policy can work to support economic development as well as ensure that the agency continues to operate effectively. This is a real success story for the policy and for the Borders."



CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE MATERNITY SERVICES

Jeremy is campaigning to ensure that consultant-led maternity services stay at Borders General Hospital

"A local maternity unit is about the identity and heritage of the Borders and although midwife-led services will continue, the suggestions that consultants should not be available for more difficult births that would therefore be transferred to Edinburgh is unacceptable," says Jeremy.

"I wrote to the Health Minister, Malcolm Chisholm in August about the review, stressing the Borders' need for consultant-led services".

"The minister replied that the existing services were of high quality as shown by the Borders Maternity Services Review Group. NHS Borders strongly endorsed a continued consultant-led service".

"The South East Scotland regional review of maternity services comes against a background of a falling population. For example in Scotland 6,597 children fewer entered primary school compared to 2001. By 2012 the drop will be about 19%, just under 75,000 fewer".

"Nevertheless although not immune from the falling birth rate the Borders maternity services will continue to fulfil local needs for the foreseeable future and hence we must retain the consultant led service."



Launching a campaign for Preventing Drugs & Alcohol abuse

ACTION ON AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Progress to improve services

After campaigning by Jeremy on behalf of constituents who have had extremely long waits for appointments for audiology services. NHS Borders responded by changing the way it carries out the services. The changes were part of the redesign of audiology services that will make appointment waiting times fall. Commenting after visiting NHS Borders, Jeremy said:

"This is a serious problem for the many people that got in touch with me over the very long wait for getting appointments. I am pleased that real progress has been made and I will be continuing to monitor the situation. There is an ageing population in the Borders and this is the kind of service that additional demands will be made on in the future. For this reason the service has to as efficient as possible."

ACTION ON SCOTTISH WATER AS PURVIS SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING RELIEF FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Relief for small volume business users as new tariff introduced after action by Jeremy Purvis

Many small businesses have faced massive increases in their water bills since Scottish Water was formed and since his election in May 2003 Jeremy Purvis has met with the Chief Executive, Chairman and senior directors of the company to lobby successfully on behalf of small businesses.

As Reporter for the Parliament's Finance Committee inquiry into Scottish Water Jeremy recommended changes in the way the industry is regulated and structured.

He said: "I know the adverse impact that the increased charges have had for many small businesses and I am very glad that after meetings with Scottish Water officials and Scottish Executive Ministers, real progress is being made to alleviate some pressure. During the Parliament's inquiry I recommended that the processes for consultation should be improved greatly. I am also pleased that the Executive has accepted my recommendation that there should a total review of the way water charges are structured. This will be happening later in the year. Before this happens it is also important that the investment is put in place to correct years of underinvestment and many of the development constraints can be lifted."

And action to provide relief to Beltane Committee as Purvis intervenes over water charges

A crippling water charge of nearly £350 on the Peebles March Riding and Beltane Queen Festival Committee had been waived thanks to Jeremy Purvis. The Committee received notification that they are exempt from water charges, after action by Jeremy.

The waiving of the charges came after the Committee approached Jeremy for help and he immediately got in touch with Scottish Water and the Minister for the Environment.

Jeremy commented: "I was angry that Scottish Water could get it so wrong. Not only had the Committee been wrongly advised on a number of occasions, they have been on the receiving end of some pretty bad bureaucracy. I am pleased to say that the Committee is now exempt from the charges and at last the situation has been resolved. I was glad to assist."

This raises much wider concerns about Scottish Water and many small businesses have been in touch with me concerning the disproportionate charges they face.

For organisations such as the Committee I am pleased that the threat of the massive charge has now been lifted. It is very important that the full review of the charges for water ensures that such examples don't happen again."

The Finance Committee's full report is available online at www.scottish.parliament.uk and full information of the review will be also be online at www.scotland.gov.uk

ACTION ON TRANSPORT FOR PENICUIK

Campaign for improvements for transport links for Penicuik takes another step forward with meeting with Minister of Transport



JEREMY PURVIS MSP- LEADING THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE BORDERS RAILWAY

The Black Path at Tweedbank, the proposed route of the railway

It is estimated that if travel patterns remain largely unchanged, the proposed housing development in the Penicuik area could lead to an approximate doubling of car traffic flows on the A701 itself.

Jeremy has been pressing for Midlothian Council and the Scottish Executive to ease the burden from the roads network in and around Penicuik with better public transport links.

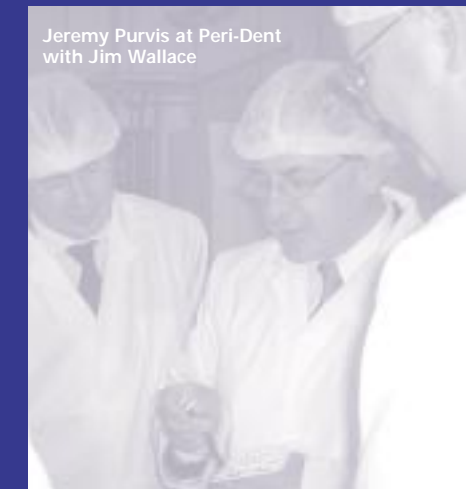
Speaking to constituents in Penicuik, Jeremy said :

"The original passenger rail line to Penicuik was closed in 1933 to passenger traffic and freight services were withdrawn and the track lifted in 1968. Since then there have major losses to the route in both track and structures. The route of the Waverley line has not suffered as much as the former route of the Penicuik route but we should not discount totally a heavy rail serving Penicuik from Waverley."

A multi modal study commissioned by Midlothian Council estimated a journey time of less than forty minutes to the city centre for such a rail service.

Jeremy added:

"The Scottish Executive rightly has a transport strategy which is built around the needs of the passenger but also acknowledges environmental considerations. In my view a rail service for Penicuik would be a major boost to the town. I met with the transport minister to push the case and I hope to get Executive support to take the next stage of the feasibility work forward."



JEREMY'S "BROADBAND FOR THE BORDERS" CAMPAIGN

After Jeremy's intervention with BT, Peri-Dent in Tweedbank was connected to the Broadband network

Jeremy has welcomed the Scottish Executive's investment in the Borders and South of Scotland for wider availability of broadband. Areas of the region are getting connected because of new trigger levels of registration set by BT and the public service will soon be able to be connected to faster internet services.

With MP Michael Moore, Jeremy has met with the Council, BT and Scottish Enterprise Borders as well as Executive ministers to ensure there is proper co-ordination. Jeremy also met the new regulator, OFCOM to keep the pressure up for full coverage throughout the constituency.

PURVIS HOLDS FIRST EVER DEBATE IN THE PARLIAMENT FOR EU CASH FOR THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

Together, the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway covers about one seventh of the landmass of Scotland but has a small population of just over 250,000 people. Its beauty can sometimes blind us to the very fragile nature of our economy and the pressures our traditional industries have faced over recent years.

In these circumstances the South of Scotland Objective 2 Programme has a possible EU funding investment of A73 million (c. £45 million). The Programme has so far invested over £24 million in over 80 projects across the South of Scotland. It is worth stressing that the structural funds account for around a quarter of the budgets of the Enterprise Companies and Area Boards and makes a major contribution to the economic development budgets of the local authorities.



Jeremy said:

"I was pleased last year to show Jim Wallace and Ross Finnie round Ettrick Riverside, the busy small business centre in Selkirk, and MEP Elspeth Attwooll to the Eastgate in Peebles, both tangible examples of how we have used European funds in the Borders."

The successful Scottish Borders Rural Partnership's Rural Resource Centre and the Councils of Voluntary Services have received support from funds and by working with other organisations and by developing an expertise in funding applications, they themselves have attracted a net capital increase in of over £3 million to the Borders and created 110 jobs".

But commenting on the fear of post 2006 changes in Europe and the need to campaign now, Jeremy added:

"There are proposed changes to European Regional Policy post 2006 due to the enlargement of the European Union, which could dramatically reduce the amount of European funding support to the South of Scotland. This will have a very significant adverse impact on economic development in the South of Scotland."

"My Westminster colleagues Sir Archy Kirkwood and Michael Moore and fellow MSP Euan Robson and I are working with Scottish Borders Council to campaign for continued support from the European Commission post 2006."