

BRENDAN O'HARA MP

Constituency Newsletter November 2017

Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2018



OUR EU NATIONALS DESERVE BETTER THAN THIS.

LAST WEEK I was one of several SNP MPs to speak out against the disgraceful treatment of our EU nationals by this UK government, accusing them



of continuing to use them as “bargaining chips”. As well as raising some constituency examples, I

called for the full devolution of immigration powers to the Scottish government, so that we could have a bespoke immigration policy that works for Scotland, rather than being subsumed into a UK policy that works against our interest.

GIGAPLUS ARGYLL TOTALLY ABANDONED BY TORIES



IN THE WORST TEMPERED DEBATE I have taken part in; a debate in which the new Scottish Tories revealed that their only role at

Westminster is to attack and undermine the Scottish government, I accused government minister Matt Hancock of walking away from his responsibility to GigaPlus Argyll. I asked him to explain why, when the crisis occurred, did BDUK ignore my letters and phone calls asking, as the local MP for an urgent meeting with them to discuss the situation. I also sought an explanation as to why he failed to turn up for a meeting with me, without an apology or even an offer to rearrange.

FREE THE #CHENNAI6



I am absolutely delighted that Connel man Billy Irving, along with his shipmates has been cleared of all charges and has been released from jail in India. The Chennai 6 as they have become known, have been the victims of a terrible injustice and although released from prison, they are still in India, awaiting final clearance to leave. In those nerve-racking days up to the Appeal Court verdict I spoke several times to Billy's fiancé Yvonne MacHugh and again right after the verdict came through. Over the past four years, Yvonne has been an incredible fighter for Billy and the other men and now their ordeal is over, I hope they can now start to piece together their life and enjoy family life that they fought so hard for. I wish Yvonne and Billy and their son, William every happiness for the future.



IS BBC CHANNEL “BORN TO FAIL”?



AT THE DCMS select committee earlier this month I questioned the BBC's Director General, Tony Hall about the corporation's plan for a new Scottish channel, due to be launched in 2018. While welcoming the new channel, I told the DG that with an annual budget of just £30m, the funding model is unsustainable and is nowhere near the £75m the Scottish Broadcasting Commission estimated such a venture would require. It was this that led me to ask if he understood why so many believed that this new channel was “born to fail”.

Perhaps not surprisingly, he didn't agree.

FIRST CHINA BUSINESS SUMMIT WAS OUTSTANDING SUCCESS

FOLLOWING months of preparation, I'm delighted to report that our first Argyll & Bute China Business Summit was a great success. Over two days in Oban, Inveraray and Campbeltown, we engaged with more than 70 local businesses who were keen to learn more about opportunities in China. I'd like to thank Michelle, Fiona, Catherine, Roslyn and Kevin for all their hard work and for making the event absolutely seamless. I'd also like to thank the China-Britain Business Council, The Bank of China, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Scottish International Development for their contribution in making the summit so successful.



DESPITE DA'ESH DEFEAT, YAZIDI'S STILL IN NEED OUR OF HELP



needed medicines to the beleaguered Yazidi community. I first met Fiona two years ago; a meeting that led to my involvement with the inspirational Nadia Murad. With Da'esh now defeated in Raqqa, there is now an urgent need to help the civilians left behind and right now the hospitals at Sinjar and Snuni are experiencing a chronic shortage of medicines and even the most basic of painkillers are in desperately short supply. If you would like to donate, or think you can contribute to this really worthwhile cause, please contact Fiona at fimacb@gmail.com or call my office on **01436 670587** and we can put you in touch with Fiona.

LAST WEEK I joined Oban woman Fiona Bennett at the launch of *Missions for Medicine*, a charity set up to send desperately

ISLAY REMEMBERS AT KILCHOMAN

LAST MONTH, for Remembrance Day, I was honoured to be asked to lay a wreath at the Kilchoman military cemetery, which has the graves of those who lost their lives when the HMS Otranto sunk off Islay 99 years ago. Following the ceremony, I joined more than 100 local volunteers in planting a new community woodland, to commemorate the Islay folk lost in World War 1 and those lost in the sinking of the HMS Otranto and SS Tuscania.



NEW ACHA DEVELOPMENT IS GREAT NEWS FOR CONNELL

IT WAS a genuine pleasure to be invited back to Connell to cut the ribbon and present the keys to the ten families moving into the final phase of the wonderful new ACHA development. Today's opening takes to 30 the number of high quality, affordable new homes that have been built in the village by M&K Macleod in the last couple of years. The £5.2 million investment that allowed MacLeod to build the houses is a great example of how close partnership working between the Scottish Government, Argyll & Bute Council and ACHA can bring great benefits to our communities. It was also a very poignant day as earlier in the week, Murdo of M&K MacLeod passed away and I send my deepest condolences to his wife Jane, his family and his twin brother Kenny.



IN THE LAST MONTH;
I have held surgeries and engagements in Oban, Inveraray, Tarbert, Campbeltown, Islay, Jura, Helensburgh and Cardross.
For appointment, call 01436 670587 or email brendan.ohara.mp@parliament.uk



MHAIRI BLACK MP CONFIRMED AS GUEST SPEAKER FOR MEMBERS' DAY ON SUNDAY JANUARY 14TH

I am absolutely delighted that my Westminster colleague Mhairi Black MP has agreed to be the special guest speaker at our next Members Day, which will take place in the Inveraray Inn on Sunday, January 14th, between 1300 – 1700.

Mhairi's influence, not just at Westminster but across the UK has been absolutely phenomenal and she is without one of the highest profile MPs in parliament.

So come early!!!

STANDING ROOM ONLY AT OUR FIRST MEMBERS DAY

There was a remarkable turnout at our inaugural Members Day, held back in October. As it was the first such event of its type held in Argyll & Bute, we catered for 40 people, with a contingency to accommodate a further ten.

You can imagine our delight (and our panic) when well before the start of the meeting there were three times as many as we had planned for crammed into the hotel.

By the start of the event, there were estimated to be more than 140 SNP members in attendance, with representatives from Oban, Mid-Argyll, Dunoon, Holy Loch, Strachur, Helensburgh, Lomond North, Islay, Tarbert and Campbeltown branches.



The format of the day was designed to allow local activists to have their say in how we grow the independence movement in Argyll & Bute, look at what we do well and examine what we do not do so well.



The workshop were followed by a plenary discussion brilliantly hosted and mind-mapped

by our former MSP Jim Mather. At the end of the day, everyone was asked to share their thoughts with their local members and return in January with further points for discussion.

The day was wrapped up thoughtful and hilarious talk by Paul Kavanagh and his (not so) Wee Ginger Dug.

