

# BRENDAN O'HARA MP

## Constituency Newsletter October 2017

### RE-SHUFFLE DELIGHT

After two years as the SNP's front bench spokesperson on Defence, I've been reshuffled...and it's not nearly as bad as it sounds! Following the General Election, I was asked to step into the not inconsiderable shoes of the excellent John Nicolson, as front bench spokesperson on Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and to represent the party on the House of Commons DCMS Select Committee. It's very different from being Defence spokesperson but with my 20 years working in the media and my love of sport and music, I have to admit, I'm enjoying every minute of it. The recent inclusion of Digital to the DCMS remit was a huge factor in my decision to move from Defence as digital connectivity is one of the most important issues for us here in Argyll & Bute.



### Data Protection chaos looms after "No Deal" Brexit

UNLIKE some of the more headline grabbing debates around our EU citizens, and the future of Scottish agriculture post-Brexit, Data Protection has, in the main gone unnoticed. It may not even be something we think about often but I guarantee if the UK can't get a deal on the future free-flow of data before Brexit, it is something that will affect every one of us, every day. That's why I was delighted to lead for the SNP at the debate in Westminster a couple of weeks ago, when I asked about the consequences for businesses and individuals of a No Deal. With time running out, the Government's response was simply to hope that "It'll be alright on the night". This attitude isn't good enough. Data Protection may not yet be headline grabbing but unless something is done very soon the Brexit effect on Data Protection will become very, very big news.



**REMEMBER:** There's an open invitation to all SNP members in Argyll & Bute, when in London to drop in to Westminster for a visit and a tea.

Call me 01436 670587

### Downing Street lobby to free Billy

EARLIER this month, I went to Downing Street with the family of Billy Irving to plead with the UK government to do more to secure his release from jail in India, where he has been held for the past 5 years. The visit to Number 10 followed shortly after my seventh meeting, with my third Foreign Office Minister in just two years to discuss the fate of Billy Irving and his shipmates, who have become known as The Chennai 6. I've promised Billy's fiancé Yvonne that I will continue to do whatever I can, as Billy's MP to secure his release as quickly as possible.



## Mixed emotions on Arctic trip.

AT the start of September I was one of just five MPs to be invited by NERC (the National Environmental Research Council) to visit the polar research station at Ny-Alesund on Svalbard. The visit was organised to allow us to see the deeply troubling effect global warming is having on the



arctic glaciers and the environment. It was without doubt one of the most fascinating places I have ever been. Most enjoyable however was, that while I was there, everyone who discovered my Argyll & Bute connection, immediately wanted to tell me what an excellent institution Oban-based

SAMS is and what an important role they play in better understanding Arctic science. Shortly after returning from Svalbard, I was honoured to be



invited to give opening address at the UK Arctic Science Conference which was held in Oban this year.

## Marine tourism boost for Oban

HARD hats and Hi-Viz vest were the order of the day when I was the first 'civilian' to visit the fantastic new transit marina in Oban just before its official opening. Already it seems it is giving the town an economic boost with sailors able to tie up their boats,



come ashore and spend money in the towns, shops, cafes and hotels. I wish the new facility well and I'm sure the new Oban Transit Marina will go from strength to strength.

## Argyll's summer of swimming, cycling & skimming

TWO great family days out in the Argyll



calendar are the **World Championship Stone Skimming** competition in Easdale and the **Craggy Island Triathlon** in Kerrera. I was delighted to attend both this year, in an official capacity, rather than as a competitor. They are great fun and not even the downpour put a damper on the fun.



## Walking 500 Miles for SIMBA



THERE are many fantastic organisations in this constituency doing great work. Among them SIMBA, a charity which provides comfort to parents who have lost a child. Their butterfly events are extremely poignant and I was honoured to release a few of the

butterflies on behalf of some of the bereaved families who could not attend. I was also delighted to play my part in the making of their charity video of The Proclaimers classic, 500 Miles to promote the work of SIMBA.



## Bringing China to Argyll & Bute

AS PART of my on-going commitment to boosting the economy of Argyll & Bute, in early in November I will be bringing the



British-China Business Council and The Bank of China to Oban, Inveraray and Campbeltown to help our local business explore export opportunities into China. Also attending will be Scottish Development International, Highlands & Island Enterprise and Business Gateway. There are still places available for anyone wishing to come along.