

Brendan O'Hara MP



SNP

November
2018

We finally got sight of the Government's Withdrawal Agreement this month. Having been told for two years by the Prime Minister herself that 'a no deal Brexit is better than a bad deal Brexit', she is now desperately trying to convince everyone that this particularly bad deal is as good a deal as the UK can get. I confidently predict that it will be roundly rejected by MPs on 11th December.

**Merry Christmas
and here's to an
Independent
2019**



Tories prepared to sacrifice Scotland to secure EU deal

IN HER desperation to secure a deal, any deal, with the EU, the Prime Minister with the full support of her Secretary of State for Scotland made it clear that she is prepared to sacrifice Scotland's economic interests by putting us at a competitive disadvantage to Northern Ireland. Under the terms of her Withdrawal Agreement, Northern Ireland would retain a foothold inside the EU indefinitely and benefit from regulatory alignment with the EU. Last week I directly challenged the Prime Minister to explain to my Argyll & Bute constituents why they should support a deal that takes them out of the EU, the Single Market and the Customs Union, while making them poorer compared to our very close neighbours across the water.



Brendan O'Hara Shadow SNP Spokesperson (Inclusive Society)

Given the absence of the lesser-spotted **Secretary of State** for Scotland in the past 48 hours, will the **Prime Minister** take this opportunity to explain to those living in my already economically fragile **constituency** exactly why her deal puts them at a competitive disadvantage to their very close neighbours in Northern Ireland?



Theresa May The Prime Minister, Leader of the Conservative Party

Scottish National party Members have on a number of occasions referred to the issue of Northern Ireland in relation to Scotland in this deal. Northern Ireland has a particular set of circumstances that do not—[Interruption.] The hon. Gentleman says, "Oh, and we do not?" No, you do not—

Prime Minister's Deal heading towards a burst ba' Brexit

EARLIER this week, as the Solicitor-General attempted to renege on a unanimous parliamentary vote to publish the full legal advice given to the UK Government on Brexit, I described the Prime Minister's Withdrawal Agreement as resembling a burst ball; pointless, useless, and destined only for the bin. I thought it was a fair and reasonable assessment of the current chaotic state of the Conservative government but it clearly rattled the cage of the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland MP who went off on one, accusing me of all sorts of things... including...wait for it... talking down the UK. As if I would do such a thing. Anyway, I think the UK is doing a perfectly good job in talking itself down and doesn't need my help to do it.



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Stench of betrayal in the air for Scotland's fishing communities

THERE was the all too familiar stench of betrayal in the air a couple of weeks ago when the Fisheries Bill received its second reading at Westminster. It was becoming clear that the lies peddled by the Tories to Scotland's fishing communities during the 2017 General election were unravelling...as we all knew they would. Those "cast-iron" guarantees about leaving the Common Fisheries Policy and the UK never trading access to waters for a trade deal were rendered meaningless when a leaked document revealed that access to waters and fishing quotas will be part of the overall trade agreement. As I said at the conclusion of my speech, *"The stark truth is, the glib and hollow promises made by career-hungry candidates wearing blue rosettes are now unravelling because they were all predicated on a UK Government acting in the best interest of the Scottish fishing industry. Clearly, history has taught them nothing."*



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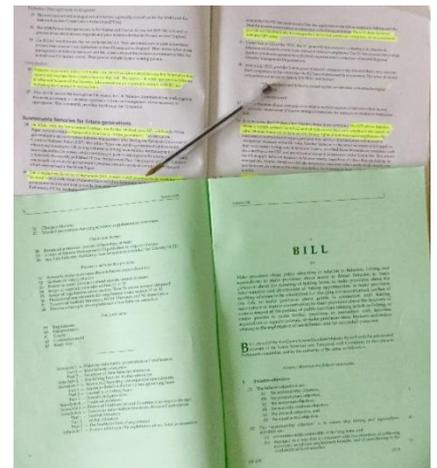
As I said at the conclusion of my speech, *"The stark truth is, the glib and hollow promises made by career-hungry candidates wearing blue rosettes are now unravelling because they were all predicated on a UK Government acting in the best interest of the Scottish fishing industry. Clearly, history has taught them nothing."*

gone...

FISHING

I SINCERELY hope that as many of you as possible get the opportunity to relax over the weekend, or perhaps let your hair down at a Christmas party, or even beat the rush to get some early Christmas shopping out of the way. Whatever it is you are doing, please

spare a thought for me and my colleague Alan Brown MP who this weekend will be pouring over the UK Fisheries Bill. Alan and I have been asked to represent the SNP on the committee that will scrutinise, line-by-line the Bill which goes into its Committee stage on Tuesday for the next few weeks. So while you're knocking back the Warninks Advocaat or adding that last shepherd to the nativity crib, we'll be up to our oxters reading about CFP Regulations and the role of the international Council for the Exploration of the Sea.



International Grand Committee 'empty chairs' Zuckerberg

Tweet

Brendan O'Hara
@BrendanOHaraSNP

Very disappointed that Mark Zukerberg has chosen not to appear before MPs representing millions of FB users in UK, Ireland, Singapore, Belgium, Latvia, France, Canada, Brazil and Argentina at our International Grand Committee today to answer very serious questions about @Facebook

POLITICIANS from nine different countries joined forces at Westminster last week in an attempt to get the Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg to answer questions about his company's role in the spread of disinformation and fake news. The committee also wanted to quiz Mr. Zuckerberg about practices within his company in which the data of millions of Facebook users and that of their friends was routinely harvested without their knowledge or consent. Unfortunately Mr. Zuckerberg declined the invitation to attend and explain his company's actions to parliamentarians representing more than 400 million people from Brazil, Latvia, Canada, Argentina, the UK, Ireland, Singapore, France and Belgium. As one Canadian member of the committee, Charlie Angus said *"We've never seen anything quite like Facebook, where while we were playing on our phones and apps, our democratic institutions seem to have been upended by frat boy billionaires from California"*.

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Charities rally round to support my Health & Social Care Bill



AT THE end of last month I presented my Private Members Bill to the House of Commons. The Bill which will require the Government to undertake a comprehensive and independent review of the impact of Brexit on health and social care sector, a year after we leave the EU has attracted support from SNP, Plaid Cymru, The Green Party, Liberal Democrats and Labour MPs. To date, almost 80 charities and Third Sector organisations have rallied round to support the Bill and although it is

scheduled to receive its Second Reading on 25th January 2019, the reality is that unless it receives Government support, the reality is, it is unlikely to proceed much further. With real fears over stockpiling of medicines, a large and growing list of unfilled NHS vacancies and vital medical research at risk, I still have a lingering hope that the Government will see the merit in my proposal. We must get this right. If we don't the consequences will be serious and felt for many, many years to come.

Chancellor chooses tax cuts over ending Universal Credit misery

IN HIS Budget, the chancellor had the opportunity to fix Universal Credit and ease the misery on millions of people who find themselves at its mercy. Instead he chose to give tax cuts to the wealthy and has decided to continue to balance the books on the backs of the most vulnerable in society. This was his "good guy budget"; the one that assumes a painless transition through Brexit. I shudder to think what will be in store at the next budget when the government's Brexit plans go totally pear-shaped!



Palestinian Child Detentions

I WAS honoured to be asked to address the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign's annual



lobby of the Westminster parliament last week alongside the new Palestinian Ambassador, Dr. Husam Zomlot, who I first met in Ramallah back in September. One of the main issues raised at the lobby was that of the rounding up and detention of Palestinian children by the Israeli military. The following morning I joined Dave Prentis, General Secretary of UNISON and others at Downing Street where we handed in a petition demanding that the UK Government do more to highlight the appalling practice of children being arrested, detained, tried, convicted and imprisoned under military jurisdiction.



Being a witness for Palestine. IN MY speech to those at the lobby of parliament, I spoke about how important it was for those of us who have had the opportunity to witness first-hand the plight of the Palestinian people, to speak out about it. I promised that I would continue to speak to SNP branches, local Human Rights and Church groups across Argyll & Bute about what I experienced. To date I have spoken at Oban, Dunoon, Holy Loch and Lochgilphead with dates in the diary for Campbeltown, Mull and Helensburgh. If you know of a branch or local group who would like me to come, contact me and we'll try and get something arranged for the New Year.

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Put through my paces at the Joint Campus

I HAVE often said that one of the best parts of this job is visiting schools and being put through my paces by the students. So I'd like to thank the Head Teacher and all the pupils of Lochgilphead Joint Campus for inviting me to take part in what was a lively question and answer session. It was such fun that a scheduled one hour session went on twice as long as pupils from S2 to S6 questioned me about everything from Brexit to a Second Independence Referendum. We've agreed to make it an annual event!



Dunoon Grammar pupils excel again

I WAS absolutely delighted to once again be on the judging panel for Dunoon Grammar School's Youth and Philanthropy Initiative. As with every year I have been there, the standard of entry was incredibly high and huge credit goes to everyone involved, both pupils and staff for putting on such an impressive show.

Picking a winner wasn't easy but the presentation by the girls on behalf of Argyll & Bute Rape Crisis was absolutely outstanding and was a worthy winner. Congratulations to the winning team and very well done to everyone who took part.

Remembrance Sunday

LAYING a wreath on behalf of the people of Argyll & Bute is always a great honour but to do it this year, on the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI was particularly poignant. And while it is absolutely right that we remember all of those who have died in conflict over the years, I believe that on such a significant anniversary, it is doubly important that we resolve to do all we can to ensure we never let this happen again.

SNP Day of Action

WELL done and thank you to every SNP member who took part in our latest Day of Action. I joined a team of activists in Helensburgh for a morning of street activity followed by an afternoon of coffee and chat. Let's keep the momentum going...I think we are going to be called into action sooner rather than later!



St Andrew's Night fun!

WE HAD another cracking evening at the SNP St Andrew's night dinner in Glasgow a couple of weeks ago. Many thanks to our friends at Community Wind Power for being such generous hosts to myself and Catherine. The night raised a fantastic sum of money for the party. And a special thanks must go to our own Margaret Palmer-Brown, whose hand-crocheted Nicola Sturgeon Christening Shawl went for a whopping £1000. Well done Margaret!



Making a flying visit to Faroese tunnellers in January

It was great to hear our new Transport Minister, Michael Matheson confirm at the meeting of the A83 Task Force that the Rest & Be Thankful will be prioritised in the forthcoming Strategic Transport Projects Review and that a solution will be found that guarantees access into Argyll.



A couple of weeks ago I joined my hard-working SNP colleague, Councillor Iain Shonny Paterson on another visit to see the ongoing work at the Rest & Be Thankful. Our visit coincided with another landslide which, thankfully was almost all caught by the catch-pits being dug out of the mountain by an amazing team of workers.

Despite

the tremendous amount of work being done to keep the Rest open and to support the bank on the lower side of the road, I fear that with climate change predicted to bring on more and even heavier rainfall, a permanent fix has to be found; one that takes traffic away from the hillside as much as possible.



I know it will be expensive and I understand it will be technically very difficult to achieve but I feel we have get this problem sorted once and for all... and we to be ambitious and creative in our thinking.

Celebrating excellence with staff of Argyll & Bute Council



Having previously been a council employee for many years, I know what it is to be the public face of a large organisation. That's why I was delighted to accept an invitation to attend Argyll and Bute Council Employee Excellence Awards which recognises the invaluable but sometime thankless job that the council staff do. Congratulations to all the winners!

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It's not very often that something happens at



Plaid Cymru keen to learn from Argyll & Bute SNP

Westminster that surprises me. I have to confess however that when my Plaid Cymru colleague, Ben Lake the MP for Ceredigion approached me in the voting lobby recently to ask all about our Argyll & Bute Member's Day, I was absolutely amazed.



It would appear that somehow, word has reached Wales about what we are doing here in Argyll & Bute to engage with and empower our membership, in order to best equip them for future elections and referendums.

Ben explained that he and his colleagues had been talking about the recent surge in membership they had experienced and were very keen to explore new ways of interacting with the new members; one that didn't involve them sitting in rows being talked at... they were advised to look to Argyll & Bute for an example of best practice.



I have arranged to meet with Ben, Hywel Williams MP, Liz Saville-Roberts MP and Jonathan Edwards MP, hopefully before Christmas to tell them of the success of our Members' Days here in Argyll & Bute.

Members Day 12th January 2019 – Dr Philippa Whitford

Our next Argyll & Bute SNP Members' Day will be held on **SATURDAY 12th JANUARY 2019** at the Inveraray Inn from 13:00. Our very special guest will be my parliamentary colleague Dr Philippa Whitford MP.

Before becoming an MP in 2015, Philippa was as a consultant surgeon at Crosshouse Hospital, near Kilmarnock, specialising in breast cancer surgery. She joined the SNP in 2012 and rose to national prominence during the 2014 referendum campaign.



To many **YES** activists, Philippa's emergence as a grassroots activist during that campaign became a totem of the movement, ordinary folk getting involved locally to make a huge difference nationally.

Philippa's oratory skills, particularly when talking about her beloved Scottish NHS went viral online and she was one of the undoubted heroes of the campaign. We were all delighted when, along with so many of us Philippa was elected as MP for Central Ayrshire in 2015.

As a surgeon, Philippa has taken her skills to some of the most dangerous places in the world, helping the poorest and most vulnerable. For many years she has been a volunteer surgeon in a UN Hospital in Gaza but earlier this year, Israeli authorities barred her from entering Gaza to perform surgery because of her criticism of the regime in the House of Commons.



It should be a really interesting afternoon with Philippa leading the workshop session on grassroots empowerment before finishing the day talking about her experience in Gaza and the West Bank. I hope to see you there.

**Open to all SNP Members. Get involved.
Be heard. Build a better Scotland.**