

LOTHIAN MEMBERS' UPDATE

Alison Johnstone MSP & Andy Wightman MSP

Autumn 2017



This is a report to you, our Party colleagues, focusing on our work as MSPs in recent weeks. To keep up with our work from day-to-day, you can follow us via our social media pages, and the Scottish Green Party website.

On twitter: [@alisonjohnstone](#) and [@andywightman](#)

On facebook: [@Alison.Johnstone.Green](#) and [@AndyWightmanMSP](#)

On greens.scot: [Alison's page](#) and [Andy's page](#)



Your Scottish Green Party MSPs for Lothian, Andy and Alison.

SUCCESSES AND ONGOING CAMPAIGNS

With Alison having lodged questions and motions opposing fracking from the time she was first elected as an MSP in 2011, and leading the first Parliamentary debate on the issue in 2014, the long-running campaign against fracking saw the Green MSPs successfully amend a Scottish Government motion, securing a reinforced and lasting ban on fracking in Scotland.

Greens argued that putting the ban into the National Planning Framework will ensure that the democratic will of parliament will remain, even if there is a change of government. Congratulations go to all who have campaigned for this outcome. You can read the story [here](#), and watch Alison's speech to close the debate for the Greens [here](#).



The Green MSPs welcoming a petition to the Scottish Parliament, signed by over 20,000 people opposing fracking

Andy produced a report, '[This Could Be Home](#): making use of Scotland's vacant and derelict land'. In Edinburgh and the Lothians there are 233 sites of vacant and derelict land, which could be used for affordable housing.

Alison questioned the First Minister about the sale of the [Sick Kids hospital](#), looking to establish why it was that a private sale was able to proceed while a community right to buy bid was live.

The Scottish Government announced it will implement the Greens' manifesto pledge for a [Young Carer Grant](#), with Minister for Social Security, Jeane Freeman MSP, writing to Alison to thank the Greens for initiating the move.

The Greens were the only Party represented by an MSP, as Alison spoke at the Council hearing on proposals to turn the Old Royal High School into a hotel, available to view from 1.31.36 to 1.37.45 [here](#). Alison has been a vocal critic of the proposals from day one, highlighting [concerns expressed by UNESCO](#) about risks to Edinburgh's World Heritage Site status.

Andy [wrote in The National newspaper](#), about short term lets, and produced a report on their £10.6m a year city tax break [here](#).

Alison and Andy joined Environment spokesperson, [Mark Ruskell MSP](#), in cautiously welcoming news that The Civil Aviation Authority has stalled Edinburgh Airport's flight path expansion. Alison and Andy have each spoken multiple times on the devastating impact the Airport's plans are having on local communities, most recently with Andy in [this debate](#).



Alison joins campaigners against new Edinburgh Airport flight path proposals outside Holyrood

YOUR GREEN MSPS MAKING HOLYROOD BOLDER

Alison spoke in a debate on the [botched roll-out of Universal Credit](#). Among many other issues, Alison highlighted the hidden cuts involved, and the problems caused for those in Musselburgh, one of the first areas where this was tested.

Alison wrote for The National Newspaper about the UK government's [disastrous benefits cap](#).

Andy spoke in the [Housing debate](#), making the point that we need a new approach to new build, to building maintenance, to accelerating energy efficiency measures, to creating more nuanced use classes for domestic property, to reform housing taxation, and to homelessness.

Alison spoke in a debate on [Tackling Homophobia in Sport](#), where she highlighted sportscotland's 2016 research with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, showing that the key barriers to participation in sport for young people included homophobia and previous negative experiences, particularly in school.

After writing to the Scottish Government, Alison [received confirmation](#) that women from Northern Ireland will be able to access [free abortion care in Scotland](#), and looks forward to further discussion with Ministers on how this will be provided.

Andy spoke in a debate on [Freedom of Information](#), highlighting how FOI aids transparency and the shortcomings in the Government's current handling and reporting of requests.

Writing in the Scotsman, Andy asked the question: [who owns the Palace of Holyroodhouse?](#)

For details of parliamentary motions, speeches, questions and voting, please visit the MSPs' Scottish Parliament profile pages:

Alison's [here](#), and Andy's [here](#).

Alison spoke in the debate, [Fighting for Tax Jobs, Fighting for Tax Justice](#), arguing against HMRC proposals for job cuts and centralisation, and calling for a rigorous and independent review. Alison previously [criticised the UK Government](#) for pressing ahead with plans to close HMRC offices in Bathgate and Livingston.



Andy hosting the launch of [PCS Union's](#) report 'Fighting for Tax Justice, Fighting for tax Jobs'



Andy on a visit to Bath Street Collective Custom Build—a small group of local families who have come together to regenerate a derelict site and build a home in Portobello.

For more information, you can find them on facebook [here](#).

Other Parliamentary Activities

Alison is spokesperson on Health & Sport, Social Security and Children & Young People, and sits on the [Social Security Committee](#) and the [Health & Sport Committee](#), as well as on the Scottish Commission for Public Audit.

Alison's recent Committee work has included focusing on the Child Poverty Bill, the Social Security Bill, child protection in sport, the Health & Sport budget, and obesity.

Andy is spokesperson on Housing and Land Reform, and sits on the [Economy, Jobs & Fair Work Committee](#) and the [Local Government & Communities Committee](#), as well as the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

Andy's recent Committee work has focused on the gender pay gap, the Scottish Government's draft energy strategy, homelessness, building regulations, and post-legislative scrutiny of the Disabled Persons' Parking Places (Scotland) Act 2009, and the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013.

Alison and Andy are members of several Cross-Party Groups, all of which can be followed via their Scottish Parliament profile page above, where minutes and relevant documentation are regularly updated.

For queries relating to parliamentary business, please contact Alison on 0131 348 6362 or alison.johnstone.msp@parliament.scot, and Andy on 0131 348 6368 or andy.wightman.msp@parliament.scot

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Alison spoke at [Spokes' annual bike breakfast](#). Also in attendance were Green Councillors for Edinburgh, Claire Miller, Steve Burgess, Chas Booth and Gavin Corbett



Andy held a meeting with [Edinburgh Tenants Federation](#) about rent control, housing standards and increasing the supply of affordable housing



Andy and Alison welcomed Rhona MacLeod and the [Knitting Grannies Against Unconventional Gas](#) for an anti-fracking demonstration



Alison spoke at a demonstration against the ongoing persecution of Rohingya people in Burma, highlighting [calls from Ross Greer MSP](#), external affairs spokesperson, for the UK to assist refugees



The Lothian Green MSPs joined a Royal College of Nursing protest, and after consistently offering costed proposals for how to [scrap the public sector pay cap](#) over many years, were delighted to hear it will now come to an end



Andy spoke at the launch of the [Scottish Alliance for People and Places'](#) campaign, calling for a more inclusive, collaborative and innovative planning system when the Planning Bill is introduced to Holyrood later this year

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Left: Alison spoke at a rally against fox hunting, organized by the [League Against Cruel Sports](#) and [Onekind](#)



Above: Alison and Ross Greer at the citizens' nuclear ban [treaty signing](#). This initiative organised by Scottish CND is supported by all Green MSPs



Andy (pictured), Alison and Mark Ruskell met with campaigners fighting to stop the proposals for a new greyhound race track in Wallyford, East Lothian. You can read more about this story [here](#)



The MSPs met with Greenpeace activists during their [End Oceans Plastic](#) expedition, as they handed in a petition calling for a Deposit Return Scheme in Scotland. Nearly 25,000 Scottish supporters have signed



Left: Alison meets with Dr Budd, fellow NHS staff and patients at [Edinburgh Access Practice](#), finding out about their Hepatitis C outreach clinics