

Gordon Macdonald MSP

November 2024 Newsletter



OVER 178 MILLION FREE BUS JOURNEYS IN 2023/24



Gordon has welcomed figures showing 35,785,216 free bus journeys have been made in Edinburgh this year, thanks to the Scottish Government protecting free bus passes for the over 60's and those with disabilities, as well as introducing free bus travel for the under 22's.

In Scotland, the Scottish Government has consistently protected free bus passes for everyone over 60, and disabled people, while also extending the scheme to injured veterans. By contrast, in England, pensioners only receive their free bus pass upon reaching the state pension age of 66 - six years later than is the case in Scotland.

The free bus travel scheme for under 22s, introduced in 2022, is helping young people across Edinburgh access work, education, and further training, free of charge. No equivalent scheme exists anywhere else in the UK.

In Edinburgh 35,785,216 free bus journeys have been made under these schemes in 2023/24, contributing to the over 178 million free journeys recorded across Scotland this year.

Gordon said "The delivery of almost 36 million free bus journeys across Edinburgh this year is a fantastic achievement that demonstrates the Scottish Government's commitment to improving mobility for our youngest, oldest, and most vulnerable citizens.

"These free bus passes are a lifeline for many, helping people access essential services, education, and employment.

"The Scottish Government is committed to continuing to support all of Scotland - and it's important to celebrate the difference that Scottish Government policies are making here in Edinburgh, with 35,785,216 of free bus journeys made this year under the free bus travel schemes – part of over 178 million free bus journeys made across Scotland this year."

Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion



Several constituents have contacted Gordon's office regarding the future for the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion following reports the building would need to be vacated for approximately 6 months to allow for necessary extensive works to be carried out.

Gordon attended a briefing session with NHS Lothian on their plans to update the building and details on how services would be delivered throughout this period of closure.

All appointments scheduled to take place from October 28 are being moved to other NHS Lothian facilities including St John's Hospital, Livingston, the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People, Department of Clinical Neurosciences, East Lothian Community Hospital and the Lauriston Building.

Inpatient services and day surgery appointments will be located at St John's, while referrals for emergency ophthalmology cases will be treated at the Lauriston Building, a major outpatient centre which will also serve as temporary home to many of the Eye Pavilion's clinics.

Surgery Notice



Wester Hailes Library continues to remain closed whilst essential works are completed. Please be advised that the next surgery in Wester Hailes will take place on **Friday 1st November at 10-11am** at:

**The Health Agency
Wester Hailes Healthy Living Centre
30 Harvesters Way
EH14 3JF**



z Show Racism The Red Card

Gordon joined the call to Show Racism the Red Card as part of a month of action. During October each year there is a Wear Red Day and all professional teams (men and women) across Scotland will be promoting their anti-racist message across one weekend in October.

Show Racism the Red Card is the UK's leading anti-racism educational charity. It was established in January 1996, thanks in part to a donation by then Newcastle United goalkeeper Shaka Hislop. To this day Show Racism the Red Card continues to utilise the high-profile status of football and football players to help tackle racism in society and has also expanded into other sports and involved other personalities.



Wear It Pink Day



Gordon was delighted to attend Wear It Pink Day in the Scottish Parliament yesterday with the team Breast Cancer Now to show support for everyone affected by breast cancer.

He took the opportunity to speak to supporters from Breast Cancer Now about their experiences of secondary breast cancer. The Scottish Government has committed to collect secondary breast cancer data by 2026.

Around 4800 (4770 women and 30 men) are diagnosed each year in Scotland which is around 92 people every week. Gordon said "When breast cancer is picked up at Stage 1 almost 100% percent of people survive. We need an ambitious screening programme and to help drive forward research and give life-changing support to everyone affected by breast cancer. I commend Breast Cancer Now for engaging with the Scottish Government to ensure success in delivering on this priority."

You can learn more about Breast Cancer Now by following @breastcancernow and #WearItPink. You can also call them on 0333 2070 300.

200 Years of Scottish Fire and Rescue Services

Two centuries of Scottish fire and rescue services was recognised at a parliamentary reception in Holyrood on 2nd October.

Gordon attended with staff member Gavin, himself a former firefighter. The reception provided an opportunity for Members to hear from Chief Officer Ross Haggart and representatives from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service about the bicentenary of the world's first municipal fire and rescue service, formed in Edinburgh in October 1824. SFRS and heritage partners marked the bicentenary with events and a service at St Giles' Cathedral on 23 October 2024.



Pentlands Book Festival



The Pentlands Book Festival runs from 23rd October to 28th November this year. This annual festival with talks by authors is held in Currie and Colinton Libraries and various other venues locally. It runs each autumn, coinciding with Book Week Scotland, and is organised by local volunteers in conjunction with Currie and Colinton Libraries.

The Pentlands Book Festival has been going since 2015 with this their tenth year. Events last about an hour and give an opportunity to meet and chat with the authors. Featured books will be on sale, perhaps at a discount, and may be signed.

The programme is available at <https://pentlandsbookfestival.org/overview/>.

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Gordon holds open weekly surgeries for constituents every Friday at 10am.

The locations for these can be found at: <https://www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info/surgery>

