



Alyn
Smith
April 2014

Welcome to the April 2014 edition of my newsletter.

March and April have both been non-stop months! On top of touring the country we've also had the final Strasbourg session of the European parliamentary term and SNP conference in a sunny Aberdeen.

It's been quite the month and it won't be easing up between now and the election on 22nd May.

Being an MEP gives me the honour of representing the whole of Scotland, which means I get to see all corners of our country and everywhere in between.

The last few weeks saw me in Caithness, Ross-shire, the Western Isles, Ayrshire, Perthshire, Inverness, Glasgow, the Lothians and many, many more. I even joined my good friend and Plaid MEP Jill Evans for events in Cardiff!

Across the country, you come across people who are dedicated yes voters, dedicated no voters and all shades of 'maybe'. However, what's been noticeable since the turn of the year is the shift that is occurring, people are being turned off by the negativity of the no campaign and coming to Yes.

Opinion polls are indicating this but what I trust more than opinion polls are experiences. Speaking to many of you at SNP conference, everyone has a story of someone they know who was maybe going to vote no but is now a yes.

“Whilst the No campaign is deploying every scare story in their out-dated playbook, we are talking to people.”

The reason for this is because we are winning on the doorsteps. Whilst the No campaign is deploying every scare story in their out-dated playbook, we are talking to people.

Getting out and speaking to people, telling them of the benefits of independence, answering their questions about what an independent Scotland will look like for them; that is why the shift is happening.

We can't be complacent. Every opinion poll shows that we are still behind but if we continue the hard work, we will win.

The same is true of the European elections. We are in a good position and our track record in the European Parliament speaks for itself.

We will win the European election and we will win the referendum if, and only if, we continue the hard work.

So let's get out there!

Yours for Scotland,

Alyn Smith MEP



SNP In May, Yes In September

An SNP vote in May and a Yes vote in September is the only way to guarantee that Scotland's voice is always heard in Europe.

The SNP's team in Europe has worked with the Scottish Government to push Scotland's interests in the EU, securing important measures on CAP reform, protecting the rights of Scotland's fishing industry and securing funding to create jobs across Scotland.

The Westminster parties, in contrast, have continually let Scotland down by failing to put the needs of our people first. Scotland's farmers have been hit with the lowest direct payments in the entire EU and we also lost out on the €1bn boost that would have come Scotland's way had we already been independent. Last month we also missed out on millions of euros worth of funding to support the most vulnerable in society, all the while actions by the UK government has seen foodbank use increase 400% over the last year!

Scotland can make its mark on the European and international stage, if only we're given the opportunity.



A vote for the SNP in the European election on 22nd May would help elect a strong SNP team who will always put Scotland's interests first and send a clear message that we reject the sometimes borderline racist anti-EU agenda.

And at a time when the Westminster parties are being dragged to the right by UKIP, a Yes vote in September is the only way to ensure that Scotland remains an integral part of the European Union.

Westminster Harming Scotland's Universities

Professor Anton Muscatelli – Principal of the University of Glasgow – has publicly attacked the UK government saying that its approach to immigration is harming Scotland's economy, further highlighting the fact that Westminster can no longer be trusted to act in Scotland's interest.

Commenting in the Herald, the Professor said that the UK government was sending the message, "don't come here, we're closed for business, closed for education" which is the opposite of the message Scotland wants to be sending to possible students and investors.

The warnings echo concerns expressed by business leaders and the education sector, with chair of Universities Scotland Peter Downes warning in 2012 that "it's hard to see a bigger risk, or a more poisonous gun pointed at our collective success."

This is simply unacceptable. Scotland is home to world class universities which attract amongst the brightest minds in the world. Those students, who decide to make Scotland their home for the duration of their studies and possibly after, provide an enormous boost to our economy. We should be opening our doors to these students who wish to come here to get a world-class education, not telling them to look elsewhere.

Every day it becomes clearer that only with a Yes vote in September will we be able to develop an immigration policy that works for Scotland and supports our universities.

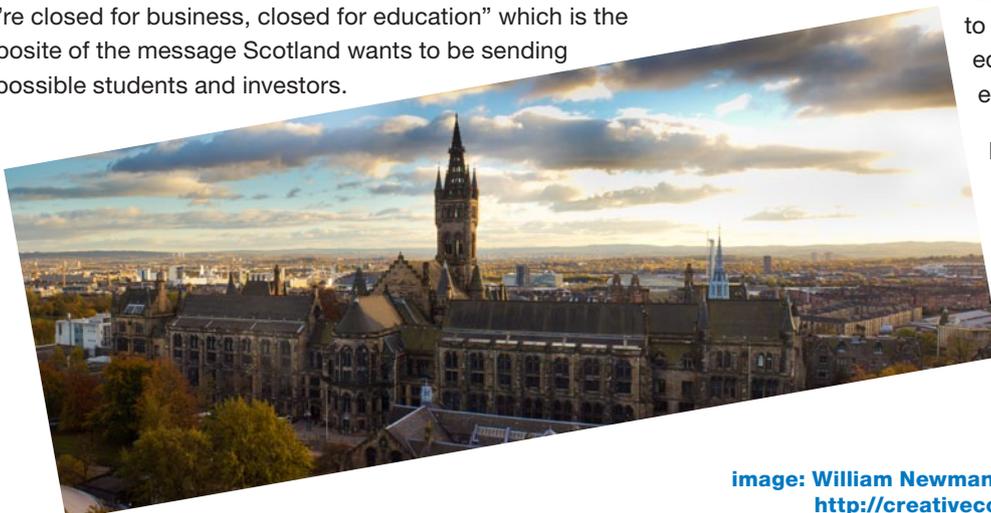


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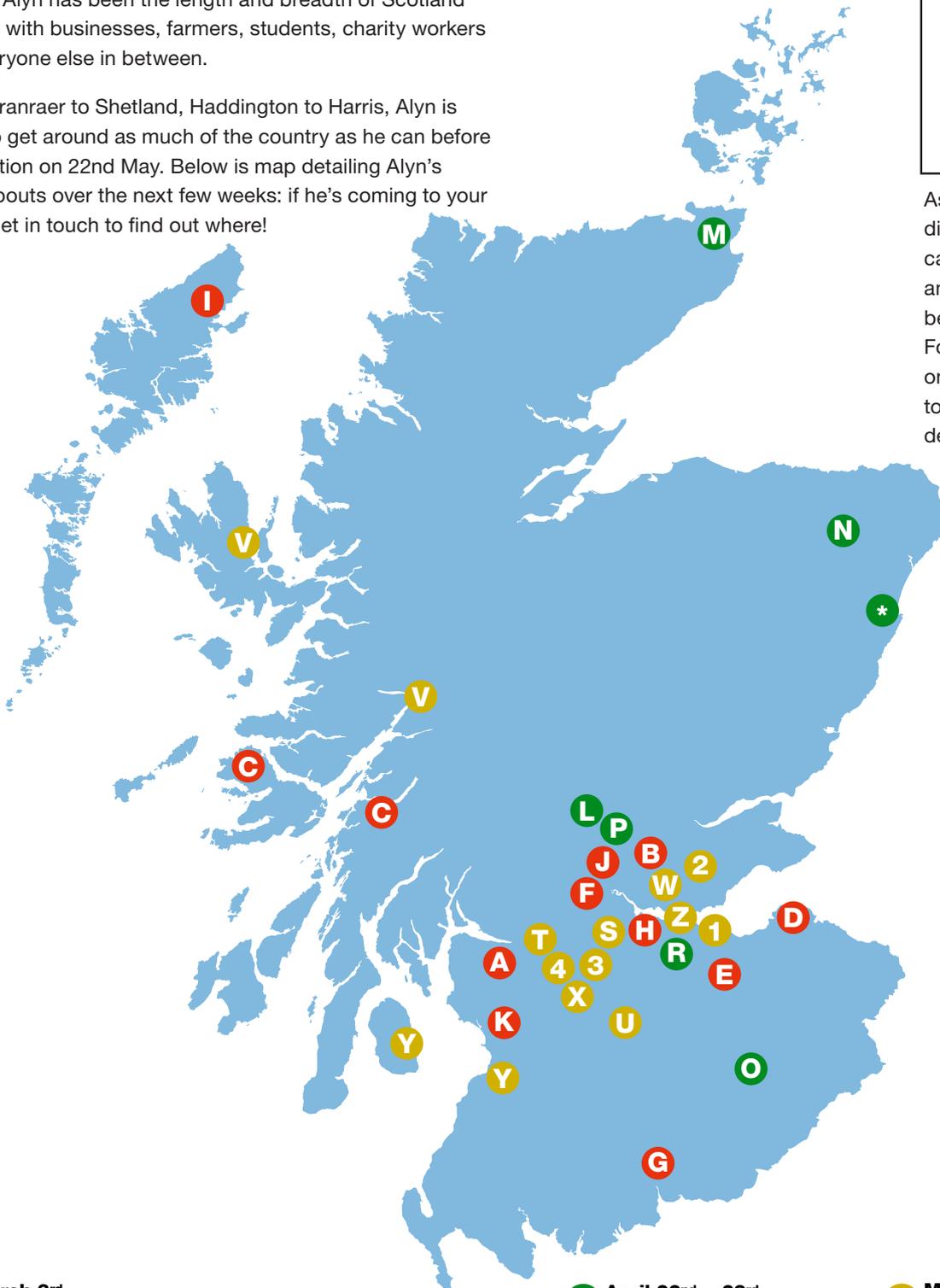
Out And About On The Campaign Trail

With the European elections just a few short weeks away and legislative business in Brussels and Strasbourg coming to a close, Alyn has been the length and breadth of Scotland meeting with businesses, farmers, students, charity workers and everyone else in between.

From Stranraer to Shetland, Haddington to Harris, Alyn is trying to get around as much of the country as he can before the election on 22nd May. Below is map detailing Alyn's whereabouts over the next few weeks: if he's coming to your patch, get in touch to find out where!



As always with Alyn's diary, last minute changes can occur and new dates and destinations are being added every day. Follow [@AlynSmithMEP](https://twitter.com/AlynSmithMEP) on twitter to keep up to date with the latest developments.



- A** **March 3rd**
Paisley & Greenock
- B** **March 4th**
Alloa
- C** **March 6th to 7th**
Oban & Tobermory
- D** **March 14th**
Haddington & Musselburgh
- E** **March 15th**
Midlothian & Dalkeith
- F** **March 17th**
Stirling
- G** **March 18th**
Dumfries
- H** **March 19th**
Linlithgow

- I** **March 20th to 21st**
Stornoway
- J** **March 24th**
Bridge of Allan & Dunblane
- K** **March 25th**
Irvine Valley & Kilmarnock
- L** **April 3rd**
Crieff
- M** **April 4th to 5th**
Wick
- N** **April 10th**
Inverurie
- *** **April 11th to 12th**
Aberdeen (SNP Conference)

- O** **April 22nd to 23rd**
Hawick & Galashiels
- P** **March 24th**
Auchterarder
- Q** **April 25th to 26th**
Shetland Islands
- R** **April 30th**
Livingston
- S** **May 1st**
Cumbernauld & Falkirk
- T** **May 2nd**
Glasgow
- U** **May 3rd**
Lanark & Biggar
- V** **May 5th to 6th**
Fort William & Portree

- W** **May 7th**
Dunfirmline
- X** **May 8th**
East Kilbride
- Y** **May 9th to 10th**
Irvine & Brodick (Isle of Arran)
- Z** **May 12th**
South Queensferry
- 1** **May 13th**
Portobello & Leith
- 2** **May 14th**
Perth & Kinross
- 3** **May 15th**
Hamilton & Airdrie
- 4** **May 16th to 17th**
Glasgow: Anniesland, Maryhill & Pollock

Victory Over Plastic Bags After European Parliament Vote

It was good news at our last plenary meeting on action against plastic bags. Every year nearly 100 billion plastic bags are used in the EU, with almost 90% of them only being used once before ending up as waste.

The proposals that the Parliament adopted will see a reduction target of 50 per cent within three years and 80 per cent within five years and, whilst these should be welcomed, we should also continue to push for harder targets.

Almost every supermarket now offers the opportunity to buy better quality 'bags for life' and hopefully these rules will mean that more people opt for that option in future.

The Scottish Government should also be congratulated for being ahead of the game, releasing our own draft regulations last year which will be introduced to the Scottish Parliament in October.

Scots Beaches Receive Top Honour

Scotland's coastline has long been revered as having some of the best scenery in the world, but there's another reason to be heading to the coast this summer.

Scotland's beaches received a record number of 'recommendations' by the 'Good Beach Guide' for the quality of their water. The Marine Conservation Society – which publishes the guide each year – has recommended a record number of Scottish beaches during its testing last summer. In total, 54 of Scotland's beaches received the recommendation, an increase of 12 on the previous year.

Last summer was one of the warmest in recent memory with many of us flooding towards our beaches to enjoy ourselves. Hopefully, with this further confirmation that Scotland's seascapes are clean, we will see more of us heading to the coasts this summer.

The Scottish Government has also undertaken sterling work to improve the quality of our marine life. This, coupled with the Scottish Government's tourism strategy and a bit of luck with the weather, could see Scotland's coastline as the place to be this summer.

In Brief

SNP conference saw a large number of celebrities and friends from outwith Scotland, such as Game of Thrones actor Joe Dempsie, get behind a Yes vote. Using #GoForItScotland, the Yes Scotland campaign is encouraging those from outwith Scotland – who don't have a vote but still wish to show their support – to tweet pictures of themselves holding a sign with the twitter hashtag. Why not ask your friends overseas to take part?

There was good news for Scotland's aviation industry this month as new figures showed growing passenger numbers at airports in the Highlands and Islands. This is on top of continual growth at Scotland's two main airports in Edinburgh and Glasgow, which have both announced new routes to overseas markets in North America and Asia. The news came on the back of British Airways boss Willie Walsh commenting that independence will be a "positive development" for the industry as the Scottish Government seeks to reduce Air Passenger Duty. This effectively means flights to and from Scotland could be significantly cheaper with independence.

Reports have been emerging over the past number of weeks showing an increasing split in the Better Together campaign. The Mail on Sunday quoted one senior Labour source admitting that the anti-independence movement was "too Tory". The panic stricken campaign has acknowledged that "[The] polls are tightening", showing that everything is still to play for in the referendum.

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