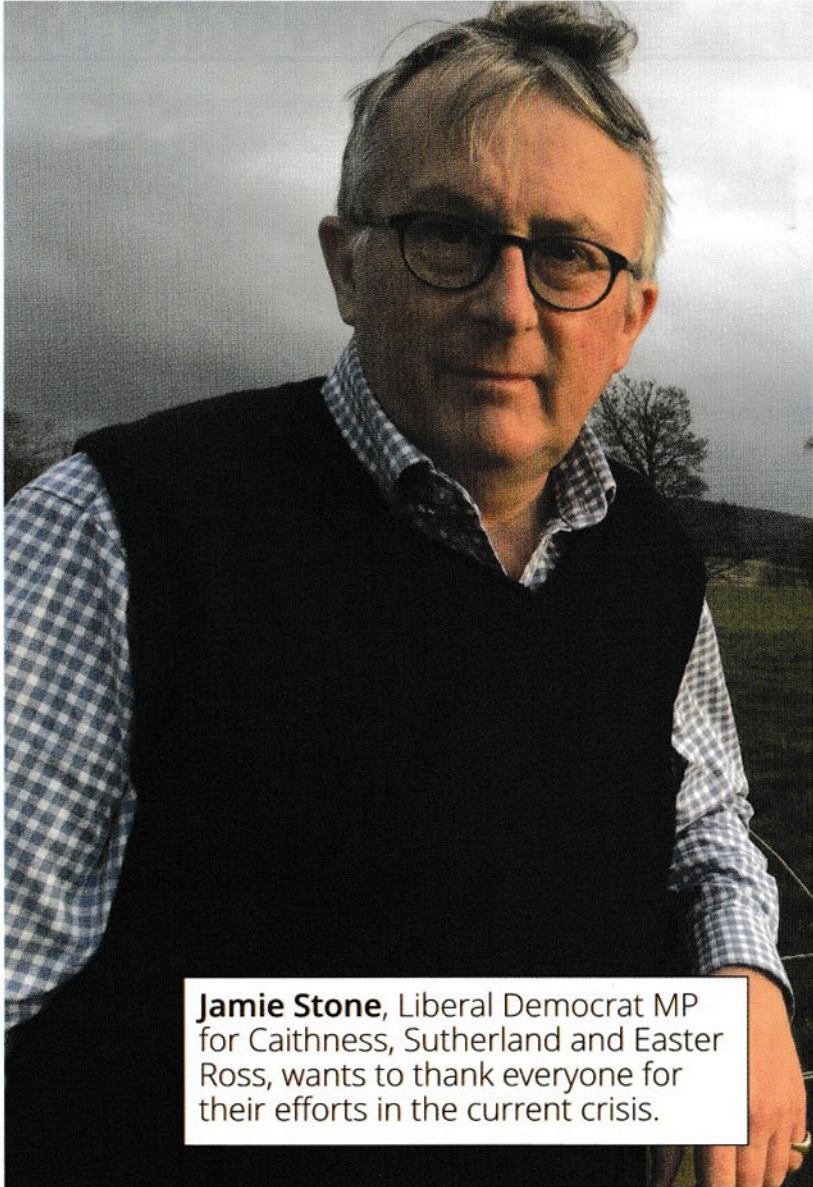


CORONAVIRUS AND THE HIGHLANDS

Information from Jamie Stone MP and your Liberal Democrat Team

Scottish
Liberal Democrats



Jamie Stone, Liberal Democrat MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, wants to thank everyone for their efforts in the current crisis.

THANK YOU EVERYONE

Thank you for your fortitude during what has been one of the most difficult times in all our lives. Thank you for your patience and for looking after your friends and neighbours - and thank you for sticking to the rules when it was hard.

Overnight, you stood up to the plate and did whatever was necessary for your family and your community.

There's a long list of heroes! NHS staff and carers, posties, shop workers, people collecting the bins or keeping the taps and electricity flowing. Those with young children who suddenly became teachers - balancing their times tables with food on the table, plus constant entertainment - all while you are trying to work from home as your hair grows longer - brilliant!

We could not have kept a lid on the virus without Highland Council too - keeping us up to date with the sometimes confusing information blasted from higher up the political food chain! I am thinking especially of the wonderful work they did to coordinate volunteers from across the Far North. Without them many of our elderly neighbours would have gone without prescriptions and those shielding may have gone without food.

We know recovery is going to be tricky, to say the least, but if these last few months have taught us anything, it's that the Highlands is full of committed, selfless, and thoroughly kind people.

We must not throw away what we have learnt - about how we can work together, to trust and support our communities, how we can do things differently. That way our economy, our education system, our care services and our way of life will bounce back revived and refreshed.

I am very clear about what my work will be in the coming years. My final thank you is for your support. I give you my word that I shall do my best.

A handwritten signature of Jamie Stone in black ink.

Jamie Stone MP

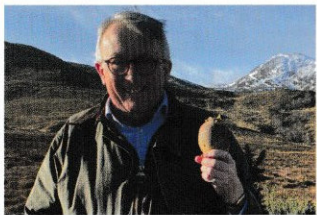
Your Liberal Democrat team

Working hard for you in this difficult time



Jamie Stone MP has been raising local issues regarding the Covid19 crisis while working from home

Supporting Tourism and Hospitality



Jamie Stone MP has secured a meeting with the Treasury about getting more support for the tourism and hospitality sectors and has been working to get the current support schemes extended to support food and drink wholesalers.

He has commented, "Food and drink businesses are vital to the economy in the Highlands but have been hit hard by the pandemic. We must avoid redundancies and help bolster these businesses as the UK starts to reopen."

COVID19: A More Localised Approach?

Liberal Democrat Councillors on the Highland Council have sent a report to the Scottish Government to push for a more localised approach to dealing with coming out of lockdown.

They made the point that there are major differences in the Highlands compared to the Central Belt - most obviously things like 5 mile travel limits - which are a nonsense in rural

areas - and that the risk levels are far lower in the Highlands generally.

Local risk levels need locally managed responses, not centralised conformity.

Helping Distilleries with Hand Sanitizer



After being contacted by the owner of the Dornoch distillery, Jamie Stone MP made representations to HMRC to approve a World Health Organisation (WHO) formula for hand sanitizer. Afterwards HMRC agreed to approve the formula allowing distilleries to begin production.

He said, "What distilleries have achieved here in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross shows that if you don't ask, you don't get. They put their community first and in successfully lobbying HMRC with me, they made it easier to produce hand sanitizer safely, cheaply, and quickly."

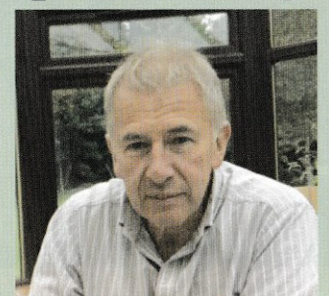
Richard Gale keen to tackle fuel poverty

East Sutherland and Edderton Councillor Richard Gale has been working on tackling fuel poverty in the Highlands. After the devastating impact of Covid19, he feels this is more important than ever.

Commenting on this, Richard says, "Firstly I want to thank everyone in the local community for their efforts. It has been a privilege to work with a number of community groups all of whom have done great work to support their communities.

"However it is clear that the economy is going to take a big hit. Over 70% of Caithness and Sutherland residents live in fuel poverty already. That is partly due to customers in the far north having to pay higher distribution costs than the rest of the country so we face a grave situation.

"I have been working both with the Highland Council and Jamie Stone about this. Jamie Stone has launched early day motions in Parliament too and we will keep fighting on this front."



Linda Munro working with the community



Linda Munro, Liberal Democrat Councillor for North, West and Central Sutherland, has been working with the local community to support those in need.

Linda said, "The first local impact of Covid was a tsunami of emails and calls from constituents who had gone up to 200 miles to get the staples of life without success."

"We are all used to travelling great distances for the essentials, but returning home without the basics is something quite different. TESCO deliveries were booked weeks in advance and the more people tried to access shopping and failed, the higher community anxiety grew.

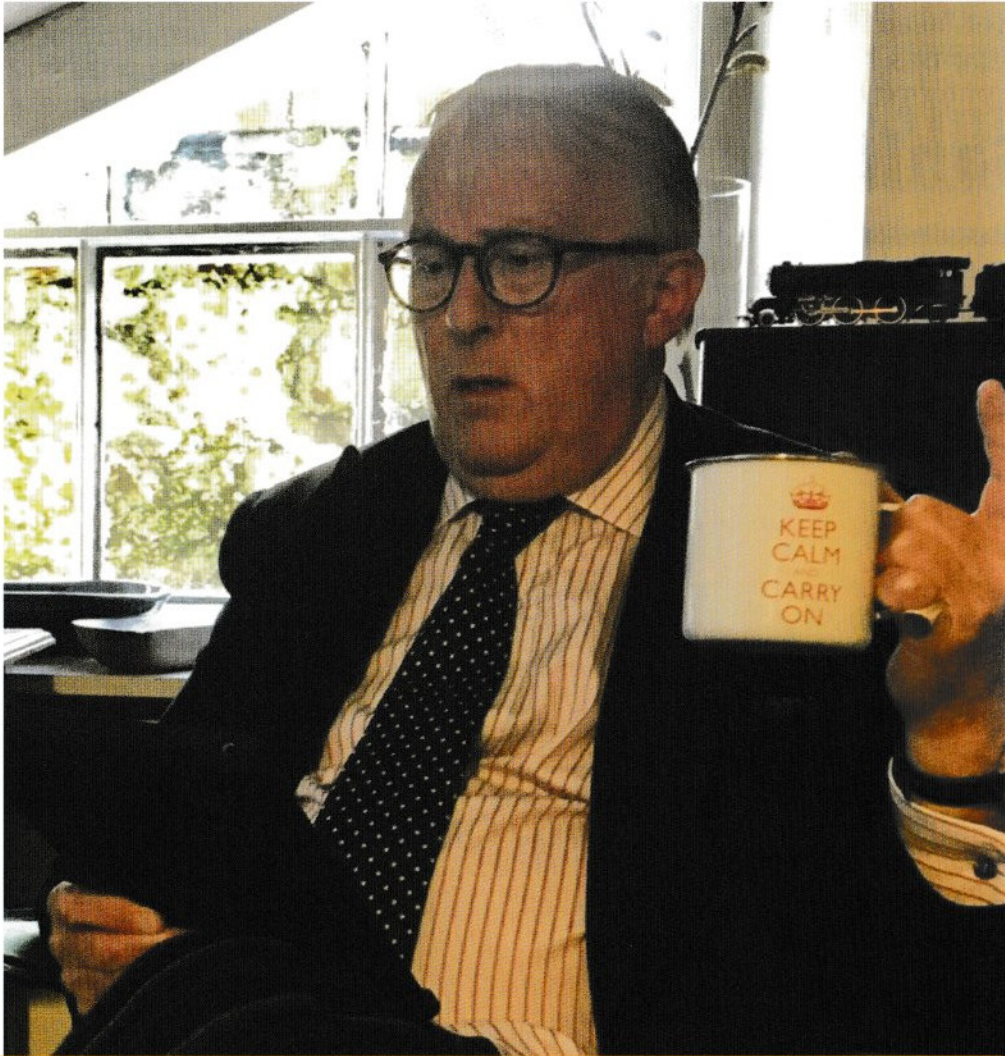
"We set up a Coop order and delivery service, door to door. We recruited volunteers across an area of 513 square miles, successfully applied for HIE funding and were able to donate food parcels and other essentials to those in need as well as pay 45p a mile to volunteer drivers.

"We were helped enormously by our east Sutherland colleagues by their generous sharing of the Fare Share food supplies, SSE were immediately in touch offering help as was Helen Houston with an abundance of help and advice on every sort of funding available to the communities.

"But the undeniably, absolute stars of the show were the communities. Hands down, no contest they nailed it and they are truly going from strength to strength."

HERE TO HELP YOU DURING THIS CRISIS

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Phone 01862 892726

HELP AND ADVICE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY:

If you have symptoms linked to COVID-19 you must self isolate for 7 days. If you live with other people you must all self-isolate in your home for 14 days.

If you have mild symptoms and require more support, call the **helpline on 0800 028 2816**. **If your symptoms become severe, call 111.**

You can read the latest national health advice on Covid19 at **www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus**

The latest local information for the Highlands can be found at **www.highland.gov.uk/coronavirus**

If you are a key worker and develop symptoms or a family member does, you can **register for a test at: www.self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/**

If you are **shielding and need any assistance**, you can register via the Highland Council Helpline on **0300 303 1362**.

If you would like to volunteer there is a list of local volunteer groups at: **www.covidhelp4highland.org/**

If you have **suffered bereavement** during this time support is available from **Cruse Bereavement on 0845 600 2227**.