

New parliamentary term beckons



09/05/2016

Elections are always an exciting occasion and last week we saw the fifth Scottish Parliament elections since devolution. The SNP have secured the largest number of seats in Parliament and are set to form the new government.

On Friday, the First Minister outlined her approach and, as civil servants, we're supporting her in the formation of a new administration. The expected timetable will see the nomination and appointment of the First Minister next week, followed by the Cabinet Secretaries and the Ministerial teams.

It's worth remembering that, pending the Parliamentary process for the appointment of Ministers, current Ministers remain in post and are entitled to the normal support from the Civil Service - in line with our values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity.

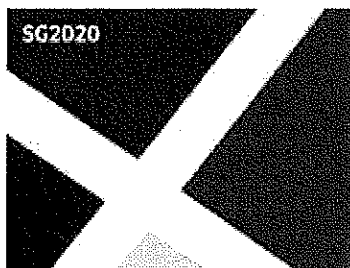
My thanks to all who were involved in the Elections Hub last week, and to those who will help with the formation of the new government, in the days and weeks to come.

This new Parliament will signal a step change for us as an organisation, as outlined in the SG2020 vision. We will be implementing the biggest shift in powers and responsibilities since devolution - and becoming a tax-raising as well as spending administration.

These new powers will mean a step change in the relationship between the Scottish Government, the Parliament and the public. As we bring in public money as well as spend it, we should expect much greater scrutiny of our work - and the need for our work to support economic growth will be more important than ever before.

So looking ahead, we need to maintain our reputation for being capable and acting in the long-term interests of the people of Scotland, and our commitment to being open, accessible and to involving people in the decisions that affect them. We also need to be responsive, matching our resources flexibly to meet the challenges we know are coming, and those we can't predict.

I'm confident that we can meet these challenges and I look forward to working with you all in the coming term.

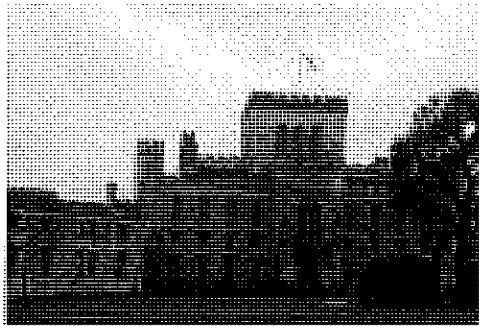


Comments (0)

Look back on last week



13/05/2016



Senior Leadership Scheme

On Tuesday I was at Ashridge House in Hertfordshire for a session with the cohort of deputy directors I am sponsoring on the UK Civil Service Senior Leadership Scheme. The event combined dinner with development. I joined three different groups of eight people for each course of the dinner, covering a different aspect of leadership at each. Great new approach to dieting, as I didn't have much opportunity to eat!

The cohort chose the topics they wanted to explore in advance. They included change culture, performance management, how leaders can be authentic and 'corporate' at the same time, looking after yourself under pressure, handling the media, and how to prioritise competing demands. We also talked about how you develop your direct reports to enable you to move into your own strategic leadership role, and getting the best out of your own line manager.

Of particular interest was leadership habits - they were keen to hear about my diary management, practical tips on how I prioritise my time and my motivation in this role. And there was an interesting conversation about diversity and how you address the underlying culture of an organisation. It would seem that we still have a way to go to tackle some of what can feel like the 'tribal' aspects of organisational culture ...

First Minister's priorities

On Wednesday, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon spoke to Directors and the Executive Team about her priorities for the year and the importance that we match our priorities to resources. She reinforced her commitment to public service delivery and reform, boosting the economy, and to progressive policies, like fair work, fair tax, free prescriptions and education.

Ahead of further announcements expected soon, the FM also talked about plans to separate responsibility for economy and finance in her new Cabinet. A dedicated Cabinet Secretary for the Economy will be tasked with engaging with business to stimulate growth and productivity, while a Cabinet Secretary for Finance will be responsible for the SG budget and new tax powers.

The FM also talked about how the new Parliamentary arithmetic could help increase scrutiny of Government, her support for a longer First Minister's Questions to allow more questions from backbench MSPs, and how she could appear before Committees more frequently. Decisions on changes to parliamentary procedures are for the Parliament and the FM will be meeting with the newly elected Presiding Officer, Ken McIntosh MSP in the near future.

Every step counts

I took advantage of the great weather last Thursday to have my regular catch ups with DGs Ken Thomson and Liz Ditchburn as walking meetings.

Walking meetings aren't always practical - and simply not possible for those with impaired mobility. But there is something really energising about being in the open air and I would claim they enable a more relaxed and creative discourse. A change of scenery seems to stimulate a different perspective - and you feel energised when you return to your desk.

It also helped to boost my steps for the Step Count Challenge. It has been a great motivation to get in extra walking.

Comments (9)

"Agree - [REDACTED] has added some really thought provoking and welcome comments on walking meetings on Yammer to promote further debate and inform future action. Exactly what Yammer is for.."

Evans L (Leslie), PERMANENT-SECRETARY

"Join the Disability Group on Yammer for an interesting conversation sparked by the discussion and comments re walking meetings. (Whaddya mean you didn't know we had a disability group on Yammer ... go check it out, lots of great conversations with some really interesting people)."

[REDACTED]

"Hi everyone. I thought I would take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new [REDACTED]. I think it's worth saying that the team already appreciates how much work is done by the organisation in support of FMQs. Until we get the final detail of any changes we will not know the impact that this will have but we will of course look to ensure that any additional time is introduced with the least amount of impact on the organisation. In keeping with the principles of SG2020 we also have an FMQ improvement project underway. Which will help us consider where improvements could be introduced which will hopefully minimise the burden on everyone. In addition we are always open to feedback so if anyone would like to input their thoughts please just drop me a line and we can discuss the process in more detail."

[REDACTED]

"As I am far too long winded for Saltire my reply re. walking meeting comments from Leslie and [REDACTED] got bumped - so I've posted it on the Yammer Disability Group. Which is also a good moment to say hey if you are disabled or are interested in disability issues we do have one, check it out if you are on Yammer (or maybe it's the excuse you need to join Yammer too, a two-for-one :))"

[REDACTED]

"Well said [REDACTED]. I had similar sentiments but you've framed in a much more persuasive way than it sounded in my head."

[REDACTED]

"Completely agree with [REDACTED]. It's interesting that whenever we discuss how we could use our time better and what we should do less of, we always end up talking about the things that keep Ministers in the public eye but do absolutely nothing to advance policy or delivery."

[REDACTED]

"Longer FMQs? How about we set aside the first one for a parliamentary debate on the purpose of that weekly session. Does it fulfil the supposed function of permitting the opposition (and through them the nation) to scrutinise the record of the government of the day, or is it just a theatrical performance by folk who need to retain the faith of their parties and constituents (a service to the political self rather than answering the real concerns of to Bob At The Bus Stop) with the parry and lunge? We put so much time and effort into the briefing for these, and with new parliamentary arithmetic this will become more pressing, but what should and could FMQs achieve? (Or debates, for that matter). Are they fit for purpose? Written and oral PQs, committees and legislative processes should be enough to keep in check an efficient effective participatory democracy, especially with a minority government which needs to keep on its toes if it wants supply (budget) and confidence (legislation)."

[REDACTED]

"Longer First Minister's Questions - AAARGH! *bangs head repeatedly against desk*"

[REDACTED]

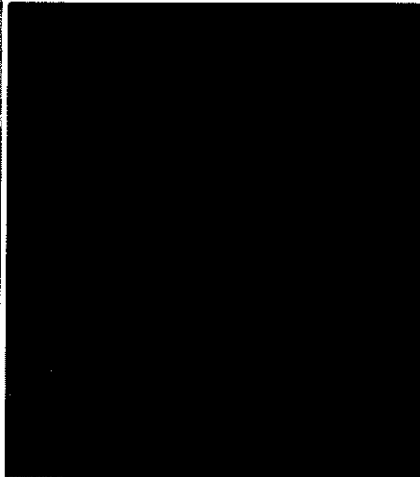
"Great to read about your walking meetings - a good example to all of us. In particular good for colleagues who are typically desk bound - a good reason to get away for a while. Colleagues with mobility problems can have a short walk and enjoy the gardens nearby while sitting. Thanks for sharing"

[REDACTED]

Look back on last week



23/05/2016



Rainbow flags are flying at Scottish Government buildings for #IDAHOT2016 @ScotGovEquality



31 20

10:00 AM 23 MAY 2016

New Cabinet and Ministerial team

This week I was spared my normal Wednesday rise of 04:50 am. Instead of my weekly trip to London to meet with other Permanent Secretaries, I was at Bute House as the newly sworn-in First Minister announced her Cabinet and Ministerial team.

The announcement revealed familiar and new faces, as well as new portfolios, reflecting the administration's priorities and focus. The day involved a range of activity including arranging Royal Warrants, photos of newly appointed Ministers, support for outgoing Ministers, Private Office and comms colleagues welcoming and getting to know new Ministers and portfolios, and keeping Bute House in supply of tea, coffee and car parking spaces. It's a testimony to SG staff skills, diplomacy, flexibility and hard work that all this ran to time and without a hitch. I've expressed my thanks to the teams involved, but I wanted to take this opportunity to

highlight the fine work of our colleagues. I know all Ministers appreciated it and for several of them, it made their first contact with civil servants a very positive one.

In light of the new portfolios, we've put together a helpful diagram to show you the relationship between DG families and Cabinet Secretary portfolios. Where changes apply in your local area, your Director and DD will be able to tell you more.

Chefs in the making

On Thursday evening I had the pleasure of dining with young chefs in Leith and meeting Michelin star chef Tom Kitchin at the Citadel Youth Centre's 'Supper at the Citadel' event. I first worked with the Citadel as a community arts worker back in the 1980s so it was great to come back and find it not only still active as a youth centre, but also supporting a crèche and providing help for older people living on their own.

After months of hard work, Kitchin and six young people transformed a humble gym hall into a black-tie dinner venue with a menu ranging from Newhaven crab to Knockraich crowdie. It offered guests five star food and service, provided important life and career skills to the young people involved, and a pragmatic approach to attracting sustainable sources of finance to secure its future. Delighted to be there - and see Kenneth Hogg and Sir John Elvidge there too.

Flying the flag for equality

The SG was flying the rainbow flag at each of our main buildings on 17 May to mark the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) 2016. IDAHOT was created in 2004 and the 17 May date was chosen to commemorate the World Health Organisation's decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder.

The day is now celebrated in over 130 countries, and there's clearly been significant progress since 1990. However, with 75 countries still outlawing same sex relationships, of which seven apply the death penalty, there is still a long way to go globally. There are also new forms of legal discrimination on the agenda in the US with the passage of bills to ban transgender people from using public bathrooms.

Here in the SG, we're committed to tackling all discrimination in all its forms and creating a culture where everyone can be themselves at work. I'd welcome any thoughts on how we could improve on this.


Comments (5)


"Terrific that the Permanent Secretary and Kenneth attended Supper at the Citadel. As vice-chair of the charity, I know that the team at the Citadel really appreciated their support. If anyone would like to find out more about the Citadel (including volunteering opportunities), please get in touch with me. "

Henderson G (Gavin), DIRECTORATE FOR STRATEGY AND CONSTITUTION

"Great to see both rainbow flags flying at SG buildings on IDAHOT and Perm Sec tweeting about it! We're on a journey as an organisation and strong and visible leadership on these issues is so important. Perhaps we could encourage the use of non gendered language at


work? When you are not out at work, navigating small talk with colleagues can be tricky. We could all speak about our partners, rather than wives/husbands/boyfriends/girlfriends, for example. "



", the colours are aligned to the DG family at top of each column, just to make things stand out more when you're looking down the page"

Saltire News Editor, DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

"Is there something missing on the diagram which explains the different coloured relationships between portfolios and DGs?"



"Thanks to those who pointed out the issue with the diagram link. The page was a bit slow publishing but is now available to view."

Saltire News Editor, DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

Look back on last week



31/05/2016



Women into Leadership conference

I was delighted to deliver the keynote address at the Women Into Leadership Conference, held in Edinburgh's Our Dynamic Earth last Tuesday. As I remarked to the chair Fiona Eadie (pictured here), the last time I was in the same venue was for a wine tasting evening. This time round was every bit as enjoyable, but with a far more important purpose - to support and encourage fellow women leaders and explore how we can help shape opportunities for the next generation.

I shared examples of my own experience on my route to becoming the first female Permanent Secretary - such as an unsuccessful job interview where I was asked what my husband thought of me applying for the role. Around 250 women attended the event, and I was encouraged by the positive discussion on ways women can support each other, increase their confidence and influence and shape the culture in their workplace.

Priorities ahead

I attended the first meeting of the new Cabinet earlier in the week where the First Minister outlined her priorities ahead. She also shared her thinking with all Cabinet Secretaries, Ministers and DGs at a meeting later in the day, where Ministers and DGs discussed how they can work across portfolio boundaries to achieve Government priorities. Speaking to Parliament on Wednesday, the FM set out her comprehensive programme of action with a central ambition - to make real and lasting progress towards true equality of opportunity for all. You can read the [FM's statement](#) in full on gov.scot.

Life chances for Scotland's children - #Holyroodbaby

One of the core priorities of the SG is improving the lives and opportunities of Scotland's young people. Last week, Holyrood magazine launched a powerful new campaign to look into the life chances for Scotland's children.

It highlights hard-hitting statistics and the challenges facing a child born into one of Scotland's most deprived communities - baby Kirsty, the 'Holyrood baby'. Baby Kirsty herself is fictional, but of course, the challenges she faces are real. Holyrood plan to share Kirsty's story throughout the life of the current Parliament to show the impact of policies on her quality of life and prospects for the future.

I found the article particularly hard-hitting - the campaign signifies why early intervention and getting it right for our young people remain critical. And it echoes the FM's priorities heard earlier this week.

If you haven't seen the edition already, I'd encourage you to give it a read and look at some of the commentary around it on Twitter using #holyroodbaby. I'd welcome any thoughts and comments.

Comments (5)

"Really good to see the Holyrood focus - an inspired way of telling an important story. A number of us are working together to have an impact on Kirsty's wider world. Our focus is Inclusive Growth and a Fairer Scotland. Interested? Do please get in touch!"

Fraser L (Lesley), DIRECTORATE FOR HOUSING, REGENERATION AND WELFARE

"The age issue flagged up by article is important to address as it springs up in many places and is far too narrow and simplistic. Supporting young mothers is extremely important as helping them help themselves can do great things, but the definition of young seems a bit tight. I remember being told by an "expert" in youth intervention strategies that by the time kids are 16 it is too late to turn them around. I found that fascinating, given I was a young offender and drug addict at 18, went to college at 21, started in SG at 27, and now find myself in the dizzy heights of the C-band. And not a single support programme was available to me at any point in my journey. A system that helps all regardless of age (or any other determinant) would get the best results, as age is only one extremely small factor in who you are and what you can do. Seems at times we like splitting things into little groupings and boxes far too much, and this works against our goals. "

"Some stark and thought-provoking statistics in the Holyrood article. While there is rightly a great deal of anger and outrage being expressed in the wake of the Liam Fee verdict, it seems as a society we are willing to accept that thousands of other children have their life chances severely limited simply because of where they are born. "

Booth J (John), DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

"A thoroughly enjoyable and inspiring event. The biggest motivator was the fact that similar to Lesley all speakers provided personal insight of the career journey they have undertaken. There was a real positive vibe all day and a willingness for everyone to try and contribute to culture change to ensure a future that represents a fairer and inclusive society."

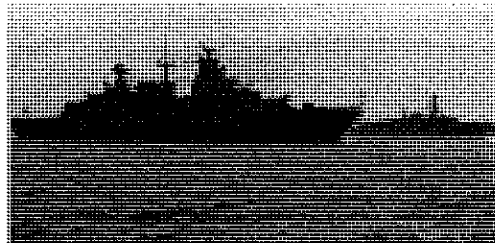
"I've just read the article and some of the statistics are staggering. Some really interesting inputs from various stakeholders too about what we should be doing. "

Look back on last week



06/06/2016

 I need to be back in Orkney & going with
@OrkneyCouncil tonight - Orkney
Cathedral all ready for 8.30am 1000
tonight



Jutland remembered

On Monday and Tuesday I was in Orkney for the centenary commemorations for the Battle of Jutland. I also managed to meet with Orkney Islands Council's senior management, and with staff in the SG's local RPID office in Kirkwall.

Orkney's Scapa Flow was home to the British North Sea fleet in both the world wars, and Jutland was the largest naval battle of World War One, which claimed 9,000 lives. The First Minister, Prime Minister David Cameron, and German president Joachim Gauck were all in attendance.

We took part in a service at Kirkwall's St Magnus Cathedral, (seen here with the Weeping Window poppy display, first seen at the Tower of London) and then took a boat to the Royal

Naval Cemetery on Hoy, where there was a wreath laying and meetings with descendants. We passed German and British naval ships (below) on our way to the Cemetery and both events featured witness accounts from British and German officers.

VQ conversations

Thanks to colleagues in Victoria Quay who joined the Executive Team for the latest 'Ask ET' session last Thursday as part of quarterly Strategic Board meetings. We started off the session by watching the beginning of the inaugural First Minister's Questions of the new administration together. I would encourage everyone to listen into FMQs each week - a good way to keep abreast of Parliamentary debate and political temperature.

A diverse conversation followed. We discussed topics such as initial experience with new Ministers, what 'working flexibly' really means, creating your own culture, how teams welcome new staff, the right working environment for young people, challenges of staff redeployment to name but a few. I like the fact that these sessions are becoming more of a dialogue. You are welcome to join us at a future Ask ET session and see for yourself.

Volunteers' Week

Wednesday, 1 June marked the start of 'Volunteers' Week' - a national celebration of the contribution made by volunteers. The SG signaled support by announcing [grants for community groups](#), to deliver training to help people from disadvantaged backgrounds become volunteers.

Volunteering can be a great way to give back to our local communities, and all SG staff can access a paid day's additional leave each year for volunteering activities. [Find out more on Saltire](#). I'd be interested to hear about your volunteering experiences - just comment below to share.

Comments (13)

"Now that I have completed my Mental Health First Aid Training I am hoping to volunteer with CAPS Advocacy but can only commit to one day per week. Really excited. I have worked in charity shops and helped out with the Moonwalk serving hot drinks to the walkers so this will be something new :)"

"Great to hear you volunteered for Hidden Door [REDACTED] I did the same a few years ago, working as a sound tech/driver. It's going from strength to strength now more people are getting involved!"

"I find that volunteering keeps me grounded when the immediate demands of my 'domestics' and my work threaten to shape how I see the world. I've volunteered at Edinburgh's Sick Kids hospital, and in my parish and for Lothian Health Board for years, but have often ended up on Committees, gathering evidence, developing strategy and 'drafting' consultative materials...which is beginning to feel a bit like work! That said, some of our best team development days at work have been volunteering in community gardens and environmental

projects so maybe that's a trade off of sorts? This is a useful reminder for me to check my volunteering 'habits' and make sure I'm actually being useful."

"Is it nit-picking to mention that those two warships are in fact frigates? The only battleships in Scapa Flow nowadays are those the Germans scuttled in 1918."

"The photo of the "Ask ET" VQ Conversations session last week tells a story. Might a circle layout and participatory format become more powerful and effective? "

"I volunteered Cub Scout Leader for 12 years as my sons went through (and benefitted hugely from) the Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers' sections of the Scout movement. I loved leading the local Cub Pack every Friday evening and seeing the cubs mature from shy 8 year olds into more confident 10½ year olds. I "retired" from that role last year and have started volunteering with the RSPB who have an amazing volunteering scheme. 3 weeks ago I was a car park warden at the RSPB Big Nature Festival in Musselburgh for 8 hours on the Saturday and thoroughly enjoyed it. Like [REDACTED] I find volunteering incredibly rewarding and I would recommend it to anyone; it takes you out of your comfort zone and you often find a new person in yourself you didn't realise was there. And the people you interact with are generally extremely appreciative and grateful. Give it a go!"

"Just over a week ago, I learned that my great-grandfather had been at Jutland, [REDACTED] So I watched the moving commemoration with a new interest. I felt that the service hit just the right note and it was good to see the German and British navy men and women sailors standing side by side 100 years on. Over the bank holiday I sat down to read up on anything I could find on 'HMS Lion' (thanks wiki). At Jutland, she was hit 14 times, a posthumous VC was awarded to a Royal Marines officer – whose last act was to order the flooding of a burning turret, saving the ship from going up like the others so close to her that afternoon. The next day, 99 of the crew were buried at sea, the casualty list included many stokers, who would have been known by my great-grandfather, injuries for the survivors on both sides, were truly horrendous. This must be why my grandfather broke with many years of family tradition and joined the army at the start of WW2."

"For the past few years I've been helping out with canoeing for pupils who attend the [REDACTED]. Each week for about 8 weeks pupils get the opportunity to go canoeing in the Lagoons at Musselburgh - some are in wheel chairs and unable to use a paddle, others can use hand paddles or the usual paddles. For some it is just the experience of being on the water, feeling the movement or simply getting hands in the water. We've even encouraged a few parents out in the canoes and they have been amazed at what is possible for their children to do with just a little extra help."

"I agree with [REDACTED] that volunteering can be rewarding. [REDACTED] - not because I knew much of youth work - but as I have other skills that they needed. Unsurprisingly there can be parallels between what

the Centre faces and the challenges we face - tough economic situation and having to do more with less. Sometimes it does feel like groundhog day. That said the reward comes when you hear of young people turning their lives around due to their own determination and support from staff and volunteers of the Centre. Proud of [REDACTED]."

"I volunteered at the Hidden Door festival recently. It was great fun to see how it was put together and the power of people volunteering night after night to keep a festival going! Really inspiring. I also volunteer more locally with [REDACTED] - who would have thought that you could gather 16 huge bag of rubbish in an area no more than 20 m by 20 m - if that! It was good to see a local MP also volunteering and strong support from the local council who provide the pickers, bags, gloves. I've also just realised about the day so will be keen to use this as best I can! "

"So... what does 'working flexibly' really mean?"

"I am training to be a St Andrews First Aider volunteer. I have been a trained First Aider for the last ten years. I felt I need to use my skills in the community."

"I'd volunteered when I was younger but thought I was too busy to do it these days - I work full-time, am a single parent, am training for a half-marathon.... But after seeing a December campaign about befriending elderly folk, I just had to find the time to help. I found a charity who matched me with a lovely lady who I visit every week for an hour. Travel time is minimal as I was matched with someone who lives close to me. Despite a few year's age difference we have an incredible amount in common. The experience is incredibly rewarding, and I happily find the time each week. Happy to share details of my experience and the 'Vintage Vibes' charity I volunteer with if anyone is interested. "

Look Back



13/06/2016



Thoughts on FMQs

I've been discussing our support for First Minister's Questions with FM herself. FMQs is the most important event in the political week. As such it is a weekly test of our competence and craft as civil servants. Refining the quality of our briefing and demonstrating our up to date knowledge and political acuity is all part of this process.

Ken Thomson has [started a conversation on Yammer](#) seeking your ideas for improvements, so please get involved and share your thoughts. Over the summer, the FM Policy & Delivery Team will be out and about meeting with directorates to talk about what we can do differently to support FMQs and to share great examples of best practice. Get in touch with [REDACTED] if you would like to find out more.

Scottish Leaders Forum

An excellent meeting of the Scottish Leader's Forum took place last Wednesday, with high levels of representation from Scotland's public and third sectors. The First Minister set out her administration's priorities including ambitious reform of Scotland's public services and how she would work with leaders to realise these. She also asked all Forum organisations to sign up to the Social Impact Pledge. As [shared on Friday](#) the SG has already made a pledge. Please consider what you can do to support the pledge - and whether there is a further pledge your directorate or division might make.

Youthful energy

Last week I wrote a [Civil Service Leaders blog](#) about why Government should be doing more to engage with, and listen to, young people. Despite an improving picture - overall, numbers of people staying in education or training are increasing - there continue to be a lack of opportunities and support for some young people. And this isn't just about interventions and policies which might impact on young people alone. Are you and your team doing all you can to listen to, and involve, young people in all SG policy development?

Ramadan 2016

Ramadan started last week and will last until 5 July, so it's timely to be reminded of its significance for our Muslim colleagues, who will be fasting during daylight hours (which can be up to 19 and a half hours). The Islamic fast is obligatory from dawn to sunset, where Muslims abstain from food and drink and concentrate on personal reflection, prayer and worship. If you missed it last week, be sure to read [REDACTED] who shared her personal reflections of Ramadan.

Comments (3)

"[REDACTED], I couldn't agree more, there is a whole generation who aren't 'university material' and who have never been able to find skilled work through no fault of their own.....disgraceful."

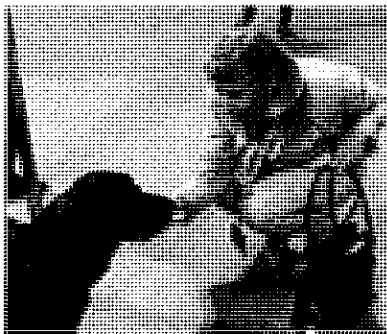
"[REDACTED], young people are encouraged to stay in full time education in part to keep them off the unemployment register. I think you'll find entrance requirements to college/university have been degraded by various governments in recent decades to enable this. Also, with the decline of traditional manufacturing industries many young people have little option but to look for work in lower paid employment sectors such as hotels & catering. All very depressing and a sad indictment of government policy. "

"I wonder why the numbers of young people staying in education are increasing. Maybe it's got something to do with traditional heavy industry being decimated and the lack of skill based apprenticeships. Successive governments have singularly failed a whole generation in providing support for apprenticeships, consequently there are many now 25 to 35 year olds who have no prospect of gainful employment. "

Look back on last week



20/06/2016



Condolences

We've witnessed some of the worst of humanity in this past week with the Orlando massacre and the tragic death of MP Jo Cox.

The events in Yorkshire have hit many in the civil service particularly hard. Working with politicians on a daily basis we realise how this could have happened in any constituency, in any town.

My sincere condolences are with the loved ones of all those killed in Orlando, and to the friends and family of Jo Cox.

FM/Perm Sec event, Glasgow

I hosted the first of our FM/Perm Sec SG2020 staff events on Monday in Glasgow. It was a lively discussion, and included warm words from the First Minister:

"My experience of the civil service has been thoroughly positive. You all get out of bed in the mornings, as do I, to make a difference."

"Being a civil servant is a tough job at the best and calmest of times. The last few years in Scotland have been anything but calm. That you have served us so well throughout the most exciting and unpredictable times only increases my gratitude."

The Edinburgh event takes place today and a video of events will be available soon.

Civil Service Live

Good to see almost 2,500 civil servants at Glasgow's SECC on Thursday for the Scottish Civil Service Live event.

I met the adorable Lifeboat Fund Smudge the Dog and mascot Stormy Stan, then undertook one-to-one mentoring, attended a workshop on mental health, led a devolution masterclass and delivered the closing address.

I was proud to see so many Scottish Government participants and presenters, and very grateful to the volunteers who kept everything moving smoothly throughout the day.

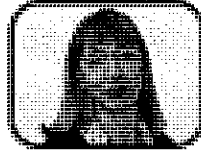
Awards for SG teams

And there have been more proud moments this week, as Scottish Government Marketing won team of the year at the Marketing Star Awards, and Transport Scotland took several accolades at the Transport Times Scottish Transport Awards. Congratulations to you all!

For more information on what I get up to every week, follow me on [Twitter](#).

Comments (0)

Look back on last week



27/06/2016

The result of last Thursday's EU referendum takes us into uncharted political waters, both for Scotland and the UK as a whole. It will take time to digest what this means for us - individually and collectively - and changes continue meantime.

The First Minister has set out her response in two statements over recent days - on Friday and on Saturday. I encourage you to read them both.

The full impact of the referendum won't be clear for some time. Meanwhile we shall continue to provide the first-class service Ministers have come to expect. Though we face a period of uncertainty and change, it's important to continue with 'business as usual', demonstrating competence and delivering on Government priorities. I know we have the skills, professionalism and agility to do just that.

You all helped to shape the SG2020 vision describing the organisation we want and need to be - open, capable and responsive. Those ambitions and qualities become even more important during times of uncertainty and as we approach challenges ahead.

Many of you may have questions or concerns. So over the coming days there will be daily updates on Saltire, and conversations on Yammer. I have asked DGs and all managers to speak regularly, face-to-face with their staff. And I shall be meeting with staff and staff representatives in the week ahead.

There will also be an opportunity for an online Saltire Q&A with me later this week - watch out for more details soon.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has worked extra hours in the past days as part of the response to this unprecedented situation. Your dedication, hard work and professionalism is very much appreciated. And please let's all look out for our own wellbeing and resilience and that of our teams and colleagues in the days ahead. We need to support and take care of each other during busy and uncertain times.

Comments (0)

Look back on last week



04/07/2016



First of July marked my first year as Permanent Secretary, as well as Wales continuing success in Euro 2016 - my father, born in Mumbles in Swansea Bay, would have been proud. And of course, it marked the end of a momentous week as we digest what the EU referendum result might mean for us, both individually and professionally.

The First Minister has made her priorities clear - to take steps to protect Scotland's position within the EU, reassure EU nationals who have made their home here, and engage with business and stakeholders.

It is important to make time to discuss the EU referendum. And it's going to take some time to process and for the full implications to become clear. Work around that is underway here, and with our colleagues in Brussels and Whitehall too.

Last week I endeavoured to meet with, and listen to, as many of you as possible, providing an opportunity for you to share views and ask questions. There was much demand so I held multiple sessions in Victoria Quay, St Andrew's House and Atlantic Quay.

I also met with ISIS colleagues and HR Shared Services staff in Saughton House, and visited staff at the 'coal face' of our response, in the EU Referendum Hub and Communications. Our bi-annual event for all SG Senior Civil Servants took place on Monday - very opportune time given the circumstances. And I have instigated a weekly conference call to keep all SCS updated as events continue to unfold.

All in all I spoke with around 1,000 people in the SG last week. I also held a very busy online Q&A session on Saltire, and have made a short video message, which is [available on Saltire](#).

I know some people were unable to take up a place to meet with me due to heavy booking or their own prior commitments. But please be assured that staff engagement will continue. Every part of the SG is holding face-to-face discussions with their DG, Director or Deputy Directors.

I prioritised meeting with civil service unions on Monday and this contact will continue. And

I have written to everyone in the core SG. Part of my message was about the importance of our continuing 'business as usual' - competent Government remains key. But please also be mindful of your own wellbeing and resilience during this busy and uncertain time. And continue to look after, and out for, each other.

Comments (0)

My one year in post – in photos



18/07/2016



It has been a year since I took up the post of Permanent Secretary. It remains a privilege and an honour to serve in this role - but also stimulating, stretching and satisfying. I remember very clearly attending my first Cabinet, my first one-to-one meeting with the First Minister, my first Whitehall Wednesday Morning colleagues meeting and also being asked if I was the Permanent Secretary, then what exactly had happened to the Temporary Secretary as a result of my appointment?

I have learnt a lot about the organisation and its people during this year and much more about Scotland. I have met some extraordinary people - many of them working here. I have also learnt a lot about myself and what helps me give my best, and the importance of resilience, listening, and investing in relationships.

I would characterise the past 12 months as full of opportunities, challenges and change - and a few surprises thrown in too. An important part of my role has been to lead and support the organisation as it continues to adapt, develop and deliver in response.

The outcomes of the recent Parliamentary election and EU referendum are good examples. On both occasions colleagues worked together in short-term hubs to keep us informed, and in policy and operational teams to prepare for and support incoming ministers. This effort does not go unnoticed. A colleague remarked to me recently on the efficient and well prepared SG response to the referendum and how this was evident in support for the FM - I was very proud to hear that. And so should you be.

In November, the First Minister appointed the UK's first gender-balanced Cabinet, while the end of 2015 marked one year of equal marriage in Scotland. At just 0.6%, Scotland has the smallest gender pay gap in the UK for top public sector jobs. We are making the SG a fairer place to work - climbing over 100 places in Stonewall UK's [2016 Workplace Equality Index](#). This is all good progress but there's still much more to do to demonstrate we're serious about tackling inequalities - within the organisation and across Scotland.

Challenges and change will continue. These are interesting if uncertain times, with the full picture following the EU referendum still unclear, and a new Prime Minister and UK Cabinet announced last week.

But all this means our [SG2020 vision](#) is now even more important, as we anticipate and ready ourselves for challenges and a renewed focus on priorities - all the while continuing to be an open, capable and responsive organisation.

Staff represent the most precious resource in any organisation - but especially in one like the SG. Over the past year I've prioritised meeting with, and hearing from, colleagues across the SG and across Scotland - from Ask ET events, informal chats with staff in Inverness, Ullapool, Skye, Orkney, Aberdeen, and local SG2020 discussions, to online Q&A sessions. Like my DG colleagues, I very much value these opportunities to hear face-to-face what is on your mind, what works and what doesn't, and your ideas for improving how we work. We shall create more opportunities of this kind in the future. And people write to me to tell me what they think - I like that too!

Thank you for your encouragement and hard work during my first year in post - and particularly to those in my own support team, the comms team and the Executive Team all of whom who were so supportive in my early weeks. And thank you to those who have come along to staff events, stopped me in the corridor, or contacted me directly with ideas and feedback. I look forward to hearing from you and working with you all in the months ahead as we continue to demonstrate competent government and deliver for Ministers and the people of Scotland.

One of the things I was determined to do in my role as Permanent Secretary was to make use of social media. I've selected [a few photos](#) from my [Twitter feed](#) of stand-out moments since I took up post last July.

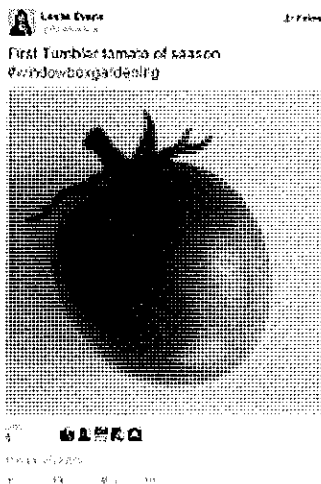
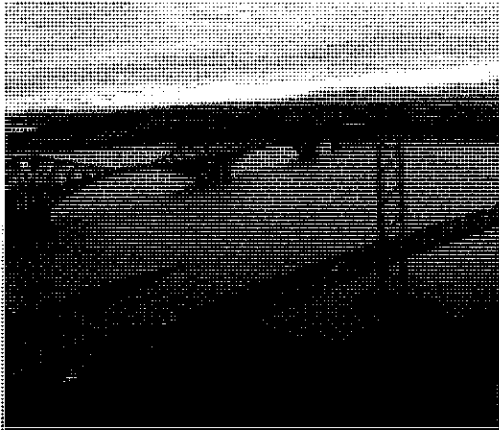
- [View Perm Sec's photos from her first year in post and follow her on Twitter](#)

Comments (0)



A view from the bridge

25/07/2016



Forth Bridge Visit

On Monday, I conquered my vertigo to see progress on the Queensferry Crossing and went up the north tower to do so. As you can see from the image, we were so high up we were actually looking down on the other two bridges.

Thanks to the team at Transport Scotland, I heard first-hand from the project manager and engineers about the remaining stages of work, the unpredictable impact of weather and plans to celebrate the opening next year.

Keeping Scotland safe

I met with Rose Fitzpatrick on Friday. I have known Rose since she was appointed Deputy Chief Constable of the newly formed Police Scotland with overall responsibility for local policing across Scotland.

We had a constructive discussion about policing, the learning to be had from the creation of Police Scotland, the importance of recognising routine police work that goes on daily to keep people safe and how Police Scotland is a crucial part of the public service landscape. We also spoke about supporting women leaders and talent pipelines - I have offered the opportunity for someone to shadow me as part of this.

First tomato of the season

I used to grow all my own fruit and veg and really miss the therapeutic benefits of gardening.

But window boxes are fun - I tweeted my first tomato of the year during the week. However, this year's success is 'cut and come again' mixed spicy salad leaves, like rocket and mizuna. They are tiny but pack bags of flavour.

Do you enjoy gardening? Do you grow your own food and how is it coming along this summer?

For more information on what I get up to every week, follow me on [Twitter](#).

Comments (12)

"Another plug for community gardens <http://stories.rbge.org.uk/archives/tag/community-gardens-edinburgh> and <http://press.rhs.org.uk/RHS-Outreach/Press-releases/Cash-Boost-for-Scotland-Community-Gardeners.aspx>"

"I love gardening, weeds are a constant battle but the rewards are worth it. Harvested new potatoes, onions, peas straight from the pod, beans, strawberries, raspberries and blackcurrants, cucumbers, carrots, radish and lettuce so far! we have also planted 25 apple trees this year. It will be lovely when they start to produce fruit."

"Tomato anoraks amongst you will know that Tumbler is indeed a small variety. But all the more precious of course.. Meanwhile well done on the rhubarb front Kerry - mine is v poor this year.."

Evans L (Leslie), PERMANENT-SECRETARY

"I find gardening therapeutic too. No red tomatoes as of yet, but lots of green ones which is a considerable improvement on last year when actual tomatoes didn't appear until October – and that was growing them in the house! My gardening highlight of the year so far has been watching an urban fox in my raised bed eating some strawberries which were poking out from underneath the netting. Makes a change from the birds and pigeons who love the berries in my garden. And I echo [redacted] – the weeds are a constant battle. "

[redacted] The big red thing in the photo is a tomato...suspect there are more than one, grow your own as Leslie does, or shop at a supermarket as I do. though I do appreciate your assessment on size, I can't tell if it

is all that big, they say the camera adds 5 pounds :)"

"There's only one Forth Bridge, and that's the big red thing at the top of the picture.."

"I've been up top the top of the Forth and rail bridges. Hoping to make it 3/3 when this one finally opens"

"As I live close to the Forth bridges it's been great seeing the new one taking shape. My brother is one of the engineers on the project and has too been up the tower, but it's not for me, so well done on conquering your fear. As for growing your own my family have just taken on a plot in our local allotment scheme. Although still in the planning rather than planting stage we have had some lovely strawberries, the rhubarb is doing well and lots and lots of potato plants are growing. But the weeds seem to be thriving. Argh!!!!!!"

"Great to see the plug for Grow your own and community gardening! All part of helping Scotland become a #goodfoodnation with healthy, environmentally and economically sustainable, affordable, accessible food"

"Ok, impressed. I agree with [REDACTED], the height would have gotten to me too. No fruit to mention."

"I think my vertigo would win in that situation, I'm dizzy just looking at the photo. We attempted strawberries this year with good success, though Jude plundered the crop long before they reached our plates..."

"I am involved in a community garden by the [REDACTED] Coriander, alpine strawberries and over-wintered onions have been particularly successful and we picked our first gooseberries at the weekend. Peas and beans will be ready shortly. If heading to the Riding of the Marches this week, then anyone can pop in and pick fruit and vegetables that are ready. "

Where has the summer gone?



01/08/2016



2016/2017 Objectives

The weeks since 24 June, the morning after the EU referendum, have flown by and much work continues and lies ahead.

So it's even more important to make time to reflect on our personal objectives and ensure we are using our time effectively on SG priorities. Permanent Secretaries, including myself, have all revised our objectives to include the challenge of supporting UK and devolved administrations as Ministers navigate the new post EU Referendum landscape.

In keeping with the SG2020 theme of openness, my objectives for 2016/17 appear on our new Beta website. I welcome your suggestions on how I might best address issues of equality and diversity, with a particular focus on LGBTi, BME and women, to ensure our organisation reflects Scottish society. You can comment below, on Yammer, or via email.

Digital engagement

██████████ and the Digital Engagement team gave an excellent social media presentation to Directors' Network last week. ██████████ delivered a strong case for social media engagement on both Twitter and Yammer from all levels of the SG and provided tips for novices and those who are already immersed in the medium.

My own social media journey started with my first tweet on my first day as Permanent Secretary. I've learned a lot in the last year, not least how much our Ministers use social media. If you're not yet engaging digitally with your stakeholders or following your Ministers on Twitter, I would encourage you to get started and 'learn by doing'. Have a look at the updated social media guidance for our common sense approach and feel free to contact the digital engagement team if you have any questions.

Young leaders

"Equality means: the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities: Cant see how particular focus applies, "

"Hi [REDACTED], the guidance on Saltire does make the distinction between official, professional and personal use but also states that these lines can be blurred. For example something like @scotgov is an official account, and is clearly identified as such. My personal account [REDACTED] doesn't feature much in my professional capacity [REDACTED], however I will use my account to promote the work of my team/division where appropriate - as well as anything else I'll tweet/retweet of personal interest. I can't determine how the audience may interpret what I say, but it is up to me to consider how what I say might be interpreted, and to bear in mind my responsibility as a civil servant - it's not a bad idea to think before you tweet. We welcome feedback, drop us a line to digitalengagement@gov.scot"

"Yes it is, [REDACTED] Equality does not mean treating everyone the same, and focussing on areas of particular disadvantage is legitimate. Perm Sec may well choose a focus on disability next year for example."

"What summer?"

"Colleagues may also find it helpful to read the Centre for Protection of National Infrastructure guides to staying safe while using social media, and how to manage your digital footprint. <http://www.cpni.gov.uk/advice/Personnel-security1/Online-social-networking/>
http://www.cpni.gov.uk/Documents/Publications/2015/Digital%20Footprint/10_Tracking%20my%20digital%20footprint_FINAL.pdf"

"Equality with a particular focus" Is that really equality?"

"Disappointed to see no mention disability in the areas of equality and diversity you wish to focus on. "

"That's a very good question [REDACTED] - and very well put to if you don't mind me saying so! - I hope someone in the know can elucidate"

"I read the guidance on social media, which was well written and useful. One element of it that left me confused however is about routes for communication. I think the guidance implies that colleagues may be permitted or perhaps even encouraged to use personal accounts / devices to transmit official messages, and that the onus is on colleagues to make sure that the reader understands the capacity in which they are publishing the material. I hope I misunderstood that, because I don't think that's sensible. Perhaps someone might clarify the

position. I think it would be better for all official communications to be published through some route that was obviously from the Government, and not from any that could be thought of as private."

"The summer? What about the year? 2016 is already more than half way done and I'm still getting used to it not being 2015 anymore."

"Hi [REDACTED] - the SYP's key priority this year is their 'Speak Your Mind' mental health national campaign. Find out more here: www.syp.org.uk/speak_your_mind"

Saltire News Editor, DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

"Our colleagues in Library services provide a wide range of training on social media best practice and skills development - You can find out more, book onto events or try their eLearning products by visiting their site on Saltire /InExec/Library/Intro"

"really super to see your objectives Leslie. I hope all Directors and DDs will follow your example and share their objectives - and development plans - with their teams. I certainly intend to! "

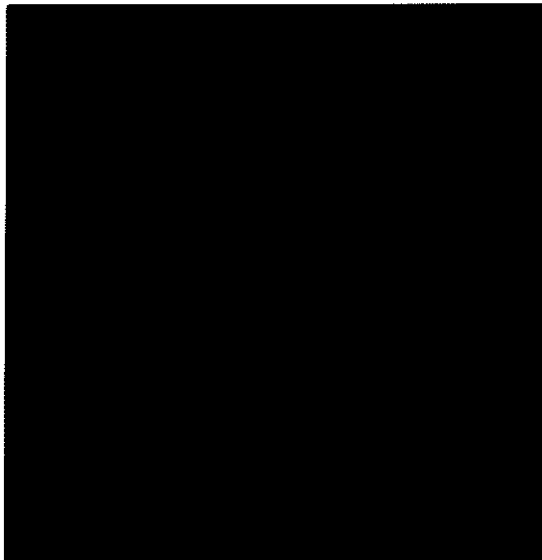
Smith DR (Deborah), DIRECTORATE FOR HOUSING, REGENERATION AND WELFARE

"What were the Scottish Youth Parliament priorities?"

The power of partnership



15/08/2016



Marketing and Young Scot

Last week I tweeted about SG's latest Marketing campaign, 'A bad romance', about the warning signs of child sexual exploitation. Marketing coproduced it with Young Scot using Snapchat, and it's a very good example of the power of digital and how partnership working helps our engagement with young people. You can read more [about the campaign](#) on the SG Marketing blog.

And last Wednesday I celebrated with the Team on their recent 'Marketing Team of the Year' award (pictured below). Our campaigns communicate with people throughout Scotland, helping people make informed choices, while improving and saving lives. It's so satisfying to see SG work and dedication recognised by external and professional bodies.

Partnership with Unions

I chaired the Partnership Board meeting with Council of SG Unions (CSGU) colleagues last Tuesday. It represents a vital part of our engagement with the unions and a key aspect of our commitment to work closely together. The meeting included reps from all five recognised unions (PCS, Prospect, FDA, Unite and Nautilus) as well as DG Ken Thomson, People Directorate and Finance colleagues.

We had valuable discussions on current issues facing the SG - such as the impact of, and response to, the EU referendum, and the 'One Project' which, for the first time, will bind together the Spending Review, Programme for Government, and Matching Resources to Priorities as part of SG2020. We agreed to increase the frequency of these meetings and extend the membership to include all DGs.

It was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] has been a key part of the successful partnership with CSGU over many years. I was delighted to thank her for her hard work.

Comments (3)

"Speaking of celebrating achievements, I heard that SAAS have been awarded with the Investors in Young People Award - a first for the SG. A fantastic effort by the SAAS HR team!"

[REDACTED]

"Is there any more detail on the "One Project"?"

[REDACTED]

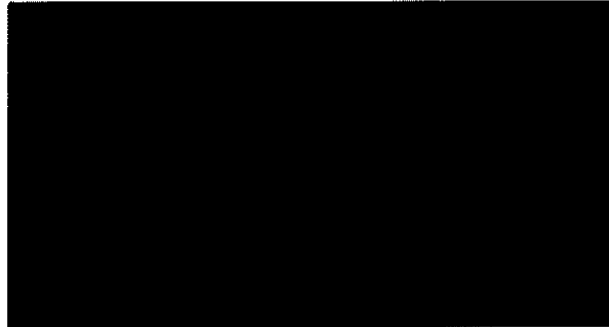
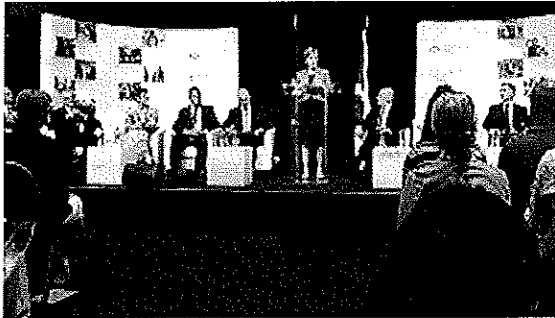
"Congratulations [REDACTED] & the rest of the team. Well deserved."

[REDACTED]

Pride in all our people



22/08/2016



Travelling Cabinet: EU citizens

Wednesday's Travelling Cabinet took place in Edinburgh. The public meeting was attended by several hundred people hailing from EU member states, and enabled them to put questions and concerns to the First Minister and her Cabinet. It proved an emotional event for some, as they sought reassurance about their future in Scotland - not least for their children. FM and Cabinet Secretaries spoke of their advocacy on behalf of EU citizens, as part of the Scottish Government's active role in future negotiations.

Visit to staff at Pentland

After the Cabinet event I nipped around the corner to Pentland House to meet with staff working for Rural Payments and Inspection Division. The team manages the Field Identification System, which maintains farm maps to support validation of CAP payments. Challenges with the rural payments system have resulted in real pressure for this team - I commended their dedication and resilience. I also met with Pentland-based staff working on Road Safety policy and from Constitution & UK Relations division. Issues raised included assessment centres as part of our recruitment process, moving from paper to digital data and future size of the civil service.

I prioritise meeting and hearing from colleagues from outwith our main and central belt buildings, not least because it's important everyone gets the chance to hear and comment on what's going on in the wider organisation. The DG-led events, which took place this month with further sessions planned, can help with this - and it was great to hear that Marine Scotland colleagues video conferenced in to one of the events. We need to continue to do more to use digital technology to support engagement and dialogue.

Scotland's economic growth

I was keen to hear from the Council of Economic Advisors last week on the impact of the EU referendum on the economy. They also considered their role in supporting SG policy of inclusive economic growth. It was so good to hear Sir Harry Burns, our former Chief Medical

Adviser, share how improvement methodology can help ensure SG social policy drives and sustains inclusive growth, and how young people feature in this. Watch out for more on this from DG Economy Liz Ditchburn and others in the near future.

Pride Glasgow - celebrating diversity in the Civil Service

I participated in Saturday's 'Pride Glasgow' parade, as part of the Civil Service Rainbow Alliance. Our first dedicated Scottish Government banner incorporates both rainbow and transgender colours, celebrating diversity in our workplace. People were really pleased to see us there. The constant downpour added to the camaraderie, as Glasgow citizens turned out in numbers to cheer us on.

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, [follow her on Twitter](#)

Comments (14)

"Great to see this. Sorry I couldn't be there but good to see your smiling faces... [REDACTED] Lorna, [REDACTED]"

Cameron H (Helen), DIRECTORATE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

"I was proud to steward at Glasgow Pride last weekend - that was me in the rainbow tutu running alongside the ASDA Pride lorry. A fantastic day, full of joy - thank you to all who marched or cheered everyone on. Also proud to have been one of 200 people marching at the inaugural Alloa Pride the weekend before...look out for Clacks Pride 2017! Volunteers welcome."

"Thanks from 1ER, we enjoyed our giggle too. And kudos to the Perm Sec for admirable restraint in her response! "

"Happy to contribute to the wellie fund"

"Hey we're not here to judge [REDACTED], you can get most things on the internet these days."

"Ugh - typo being amended asap!"

"" A day without laughter is a Day wasted" Charlie Chaplin I would like to thank [REDACTED] for providing 2W (and other parts of the office) with a welcome dose of laughter on a dull Tuesday morning. The 'value' of a slipped vowel! PS donations for [REDACTED] WELLIE collection very welcome c/o Strategic Analysis, 2W, SAH"

"[REDACTED] - are you sure? "

Evans L (Leslie), PERMANENT-SECRETARY

"It was great to be there, despite the rain. Next year I'll be investing in rainbow wellies!"

"Great turn out for Glasgow Pride- I would have loved to have made it too. I am going to invest a rainbow umbrella in anticipation of our next outdoor event. And I am so pleased/relieved the banner worked out!!"

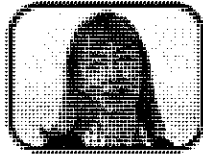
"The torrential rain aside, I really enjoyed Saturday and the atmosphere was really great thanks as Lorna mentioned the lovely Glasgow crowds. It was really go too to join up with colleagues across the Civil Service. Lets do bigger and better next year? You can catch some of the photos on Yammer - www.yammer.com/scotland.gsi.gov.uk/#!/threads/show?threadId=753557270 "

"and I reprised my role as photographer! great day - although the rain was the bouncing off the pavement variety!!! "

"Great photo! Well done to all who participated, despite the weather. Sorry I couldn't join you. And great to see the banner in place for the Glasgow parade!"
Allison B (Barbara), DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

"Thanks to all those who trudged through torrential rain in Glasgow on Saturday. It's great to see that level of support. We went back to the Pride site on Sunday and it was almost sunny for a while. "

Gibbs L (Lorna), DIRECTORATE FOR PEOPLE



A winning week

29/08/2016



Golden Days

I shared the pride felt by the whole country as we welcomed our most successful ever overseas Olympic team back home last Monday, with 13 medals for Scottish competitors. Their achievements serve as a great inspiration for young people, not just those with an interest in sports.

I was conscious of this when I met with colleagues this week to consider the impact and nature of SG work aimed at improving outcomes for all our young people. And with Naomi Eisenstadt, Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality, during our discussions about Shifting the Curve - Naomi's report to the First Minister setting out what action the Scottish Government (and others) can take to reduce poverty in Scotland.

Culture Summit

Edinburgh International Culture Summit brought Government Ministers, policy makers and artists from across the globe to share ideas, expertise and best practice in cultural policy and investment.

I chaired a lively session on the sustainability of culture with presentations from South Africa, Australia and Glasgow. The British Council was instrumental in supporting the event and I met with Sir Ciaran Devane and Jackie Killeen, pictured here with Ian Mitchell, Head of External Relations.


Looking after our people

On Tuesday, I attended a session held by the Charity for Civil Servants at St Andrew's House. The Charity carried out an impressive tour of our buildings to raise awareness of their services. Formerly known as the Civil Service Benevolent Fund, the Charity provides much more than financial assistance. I would encourage colleagues to contact them for help with any problems - mental health, relationships, or those with caring responsibilities. It's good to know they're there.


For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, [follow her on Twitter](#)

Comments (5)


<http://www.scottishparliament.tv/Archive/Index/a03d20a5-621f-488f-a27f-b54f053d47d8?categoryId=2b4a853f-2c6d-46f2-9201-2cff813e7fe4&parentCategoryClicked=False&pageNumber=1&orderByField=ScheduledStart&queryOrder=DESC> <http://www.scottishparliament.tv/Archive/Index/171e3501-ee81-4605-804e-f8c6b1510ddc?categoryId=2b4a853f-2c6d-46f2-9201-2cff813e7fe4&parentCategoryClicked=False&pageNumber=1&orderByField=ScheduledStart&queryOrder=DESC> The second link (Part IV) is where you will see the Chamber floor - including Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop - joining in movement exercises!




<http://www.scottishparliament.tv/Archive/Index/a03d20a5-621f-488f-a27f-b54f053d47d8?categoryId=2b4a853f-2c6d-46f2-9201-2cff813e7fe4&parentCategoryClicked=False&pageNumber=1&orderByField=ScheduledStart&queryOrder=DESC> <http://www.scottishparliament.tv/Archive/Index/171e3501-ee81-4605-804e-f8c6b1510ddc?categoryId=2b4a853f-2c6d-46f2-9201-2cff813e7fe4&parentCategoryClicked=False&pageNumber=1&orderByField=ScheduledStart&queryOrder=DESC> The second link (Part IV) is where you will see the Chamber floor - including Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop - joining in movement exercises!



"Diane, the youth forum presentations sounds really interesting but I couldn't find the clips on a quick glance. Can someone send a link?"



"I volunteered at the Culture Summit this year with the Youth Forum delegates and I can honestly say that they were so inspiring, so articulate and some of the best speakers I think have ever spoken in Parliament! I found it a great experience, and will definitely volunteer in 2018 to work with the Youth Forum again!"



"I'd like to extend my thanks to all of my SG colleagues who worked so hard to deliver what was an excellent Culture Summit. We were delighted to have the invaluable help of 30 Delegate Aide volunteers, drawn from across the office, who made sure that the delegations from the 41 many far-flung countries had the best possible experience of Edinburgh and Scotland. Take a look at the Scottish Parliament TV clips to see some of the inspirational presentations, not least from the Youth Forum attendees. "

McLafferty DJ (Diane), DIRECTORATE FOR CULTURE, TOURISM AND MAJOR EVENTS

Hello, September



05/09/2016



Food for thought

I hosted a dinner for the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) at Edinburgh College this week, joined by Paul Johnston, and other SG education colleagues. The inaugural meeting of the Council took place earlier in the day, attended by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Over dinner we discussed closing the attainment gap. Advisers recognised that the answer to this challenge extends beyond the classroom. And they emphasised the importance of everyone understanding and 'owning' the changes required - 'inspired by some and carried by many' as it was described. The dinner - food and service - was excellent and I plan to send out certificates of recognition to each of the students involved. They are a real credit to Scotland's college system.

Ask ET

The latest 'Ask Executive Team' session took place on Thursday in St Andrew's House. We enjoyed a lively and informal discussion with around 60 members of staff. Issues raised included how to balance work and family life, managing risk, prioritising, and how to get the

organisation "into shape" by 2020. Colleagues said that they felt these sessions are proving successful in making ET more visible and accessible - that is good to hear. Ken Thomson wins the prize for most diverse references - hotel showers, racehorses and Genghis Khan!

If you were unable to attend Ask ET or secure a place at the upcoming events with the Finance Secretary, do register for one of the September Ask DG events which will be advertised on Saltire. You'll have the opportunity to hear more about the Programme for Government and put questions to a member of the Executive Team.

Light it up gold in September

You may have noticed St Andrew's House lit up with gold lights recently. St Andrew's House and Victoria Quay will be 'gold' during September as the Scottish Government takes part in the 'Light it up gold' campaign to raise awareness of childhood cancer, the early signs and symptoms, earlier diagnosis, and increased funding and research. You can see other buildings and find out more on the [campaign's website](#).

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, [follow her on Twitter](#)

Comments (6)

[REDACTED] - the lights are set at both VQ and SAH from 7.30pm to 6.30am this has been agreed between Mitics Energy Manager and the SG. The lights are LED so doesn't use up that much energy."

[REDACTED]

"Like the gold floodlighting but it does seem to come on when it's still daylight. Shouldn't we have some sort of dusk-to-dawn timer on floodlights for energy conservation?"

[REDACTED]

"Not forgetting the National award winning Terrace Restaurant at West Lothian college in Livingston. <http://www.west-lothian.ac.uk/about-us/terrace-restaurant> The Terrace Restaurant is the Scottish Restaurant of the year 2015 (as voted in the Scottish Food Awards 2015). The restaurant is primarily a training restaurant for our Hospitality students, providing a valuable experience of a real restaurant situation where they produce dishes of the highest standard. The students are supervised by expert chefs in the planning, cooking and serving of dishes and the restaurant operates in a totally professional manner. The restaurant is open to students, staff and members of the public for both lunches and evening meals. "

[REDACTED]

"Looks great, Paul! <http://www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk/Welcome/Health-and-Leisure/Restaurants/eh15>"

[REDACTED]

"I didn't know that Paul - I will certainly check it out soon!"

[REDACTED]

"I highly recommend dinner at Edinburgh College. Their restaurant - EH15 - is open to all for at least a couple of nights each week. Fantastic food at a great price, while supporting the college students. I'm looking forward to a return visit..."

Johnston P (Paul), DG: LEARNING AND JUSTICE



Good company from London to Edinburgh

12/09/2016



Programme for Government

Last Tuesday the First Minister announced the Programme for Government (PfG) for the first year of the new parliamentary term in her speech to the Scottish Parliament. The PfG sets out the policies, legislation and plans for the year ahead. It highlights the even greater need for us to be an open, capable and responsive civil service, reflecting our [SG2020 vision](#). Read the [Programme for Government](#) in full on the Scottish Government website.

The first of two SG2020 events to discuss the PfG was held last Thursday in St Andrew's House. Thanks to colleagues who attended and joined in discussions with myself and the Finance Secretary. Our conversation covered the priorities as set out in PfG, the importance of SG2020 in helping us deliver it, and examples of what SG2020 has already achieved. The second event is today in Glasgow - and you'll be able to hear more about the conversations on Saltire shortly.

Shared learning

Last Wednesday I hosted an informal discussion session in Whitehall with senior leaders from across government departments. I was joined by colleagues from Work and Pensions, Cabinet Office, Health, and Energy (the last of whom was recently moved into the new Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy). Informal opportunities to share and learn with colleagues are so valuable, especially during fast moving times like these - but we have to work to prioritise this in our busy diaries. I talk about key ingredients of communication, trust and mutual respect as the recipe for successful partnership working in my latest Civil Service Leaders' blog which will be published shortly.

Scottish Food and Drink Fortnight

Scottish Food & Drink Fortnight 2016 is underway and runs until 18 September. Scotland Food and Drink recently announced that the Scottish food and drink industry contributes more than £14bn to the Scottish economy, with sales growing in the UK and internationally. And celebrating Scottish produce, I tweeted a photo of my window box tomatoes last week - they have benefitted from recent sunny weather. What are you growing?

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, [follow her on Twitter](#).

Comments (13)

"I live on the top floor of a tenement with a north facing (beach side) garden. I'm successfully growing herbs and flowers in pots in the stair (hung off the stair rail). I have also grown cherry tomatoes in the south facing bedroom. So - don't despair if you don't have access to land. "

"Great to see the Perm Sec promoting our ambition for Scotland to become a #goodfoodnation. Whether growing is your thing, cooking or just eating! celebrating the great Scottish produce in a green and healthy way fits with our vision. "

"Shared learning is often an under utilised form of learning. We know from feedback that peer to peer/Action Learning are great opportunities for people to have great conversations. Mentoring/buddying also provide an opportunity for people to share their experiences and make connections across the organisation. Making connections outside of the organisation also provides a different perspective. Keep eye out on Saltire for a piece with a specific focus on mentoring - anyone can be a mentor."

"██████, thanks. However, for us in North Edinburgh Drumbryden is a bit too far. We email the allotments officer annually but our position on the list rarely reduces in line with the elapsed time. Beginning to wonder if it's governed by who you know!"

"██████ - it depends how picky you want to be. My wife has an allotment at Drumbryden and there are plots free there. try speaking to the council again."

"██████, if you're in Edinburgh don't hold your breath. We're now into year ten of a six-year waiting list, and when some new allotments were created nearby they were largely given to people who hadn't even been on the waiting list. Bitter, moi?!"

"Thanks ████████ - keep up the good fight!"

"I'm lucky enough to have an 8'x6' greenhouse - its been an excellent season for tomatoes, chilli peppers and cucumber. "

"Our "Scottish collection" apples are doing well this year - Oslin, East Lothian Pippin, Coul Blush and Tower of Glamis are amongst the fifty or so varieties we grow."

"██████████, I'm fighting tirelessly on behalf of good folk like yourself, so that you won't have to wait 9 years for an allotment:
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/CommunityEmpowermentBillFAQs> (Scroll down to Part 9)."

"We brought in the potato harvest this weekend. Planted 5 seed potatoes (not even proper seed potatoes, just supermarket potatoes that had sprouted as been left too long), in 5 largish pots and got almost a pot's worth of very decent potatoes back - pleased with that rate of return. The secret is in the 'earthing up', which is much easier to do in pots than in my previous attempts in a small veg bed. (Just start by planting in a half full pot and keep filling up pot with more soil every time the shoots show through, till it is full.) Courgettes also did well in pots, but tomatoes all still green! Chutney anyone? "

"In our house we are growing various kinds of fungus enjoying damp conditions. Climate change is proving extremely beneficial for them."

"When we moved to our new house, we went on to the waiting list for an allotment on the other side of the street - we're now two years in to our anticipated nine year wait, but getting some practice in our tiny little garden with tomatoes and courgettes, and various herbs. We've had five tomatoes successfully turn red, and one (very fat) courgette so far."

Leadership in a complex climate



26/09/2016



Women into Leadership conference

On Wednesday, I delivered the plenary speech for the Women into Leadership (WiL) conference in London. Now in its seventh year, WiL events are designed for all those interested in enhancing leadership opportunities for women.

I talked about how our VUCA world (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) means a new kind of leadership is required - one that is inclusive, cooperative, agile and open. The days of a steering and controlling leader are over - we must be comfortable with ambiguity, collaborative in style and capable of responding in the moment.

Many women are quite comfortable with this way of working, but there is still much to do to address their confidence levels and encourage them to seek stretching leadership opportunities. In my speech I suggested ways to grow the next generation of women leaders including drawing upon their values and identifying what makes them passionate, seeking out

a mentor, being precise in our feedback and generous in sharing our own experience. In fact, I believe these are applicable to anyone's development, regardless of gender.

My favourite mantra, 'What you permit, you promote', resonated with attendees. This applies to many aspects of leadership and equally to organisational culture. Our behaviours, what we believe is tolerated in the organisation, how decisions really get taken - all this shapes the workplace culture. This saying applies equally to resilience and the importance of looking after ourselves, and looking out for each other. Without that, we risk becoming less effective at our jobs and in our teams.

What attributes in leaders have motivated you the most? What do you think is most needed from leaders during these ambiguous times? I would be interested in hearing your views.

NXD Network meeting, and a fond farewell

We said farewell to Christina Allon at our recent Strategic Board. Christina has been Scottish Government Non-Executive Director (NXD) since 2010, playing a key role in supporting and scrutinising the work of our organisation.

NXDs play an invaluable role bringing fresh perspectives from external experience, specialist knowledge and, crucially, playing the role of 'critical friend'.

Changes are coming to the Strategic Board as a result of the SG2020 corporate governance review. Keep an eye on Saltire for more information.

Climate Week

As part of the first ever national Climate Week, we took the opportunity to 'reclaim' some of the car parking spaces at Victoria Quay on World Car Free Day on Thursday. It was a glorious sunny day with activities in that space promoting physical activity, air-quality improvement and reduction of car use to cut emissions - all Scottish Government priorities.

I tweeted a photo of one of my walks that day. Only one car was on the move.

National Inclusion Week

Today marks the beginning of National Inclusion Week - an annual campaign run by inclusive employers to highlight the benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce.

As we work towards becoming the organisation we want and need to be by 2020, we will continue to cultivate an inclusive culture, one that enables us to bring our whole selves to work. More will follow on Saltire in the coming weeks on awareness-raising seminars and other opportunities to broaden your horizons.

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, [follow her on Twitter](#).

Comments (6)

" What is sometimes worse, though, and seems to be happening more and more, is the active, (whether conscious or unconscious), promotion of poor working practices and then holding

them up as a standard. That, and people's over-inflated sense of their own importance."

"So very true, 'What you permit, you promote', and it applies to all aspects of the working life. But things have to be taken seriously otherwise it all becomes yet another tick-box exercise and someone else is then (often unfairly) left to tidy up the mess."

"I'd love to see Glasgow and Edinburgh emulate Paris by turning their city centres entirely over to active travellers on World Car Free Day. Nudging is fine, but sometimes people need a bit of a harder dunt to change their habits - and, in this case, allow them to see how our cities will look in a decade or so ;0)"

"Leadership in a complex world, see article here: <https://hbr.org/2007/11/a-leaders-framework-for-decision-making> Also see the Art of Participatory Leadership & Hosting conversations that matter, ULab and "Reinventing Organisations" by Frederic Laloux. All taken together demonstrate what's now needed."

"The world in which we live is no longer simply complicated, it is now highly complex, and how we deal with this changed situation is completely and utterly different to the old world. Perhaps one approach to consider would be the Cynefin approach as outlined in this article: <https://hbr.org/2007/11/a-leaders-framework-for-decision-making>. I'm an advocate of the practices of the Art of Participatory Leadership & Hosting, and indeed ULab which all together provide a quite different approach to dealing with the complex. New models of working and organisation are now fast emerging and being practised; take a look at the book "Reinventing Organisations" by Frederic Laloux, and in particular the Buurtzorg approach to health and social care and the organisational structure delivering the service. "

"I recently studied Glenn Lyons and Cody Davidson's Guidance for transport planning and policymaking in the face of an uncertain future - <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965856416302555> - They advise that it is not a matter of predicting the future but to explore the question of how to develop a better future. They suggest that this moves us from 'predict and provide' (as per current regime-compliant policy-making pathway) to 'decide and provide' (following a regime-testing policy-making pathway). I would love leaders to embrace this new approach to policy making."

Top Cat



03/10/2016



Leslie Evans @PermSecScot · 19h

Great to catch up with VIP @foreignoffice - & Perm Sec @SMcDonaldFCO... #topcat #stunningartwork



Simon McDonald @SMcDonaldFCO

@PermSecScot admired 2 new-ish features @foreignoffice: @DiploMog & my new picture.



I try and attend Wednesday Morning Colleagues most weeks. It is the opportunity for Sir Jeremy Heywood and all Permanent Secretaries to catch up on key and topical issues. This week we heard from the Prime Minister herself on her priorities, views on the civil service and devolution. We also heard a fascinating analysis of the USA Presidential election to date from the Ambassador.

Whilst in London I met with the Perm Sec of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Alex Chisholm to talk about energy, Scotland's contribution to the forthcoming industrial strategy and how we share evidence gathered as part of work on Europe.

I also caught up with Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign And Commonwealth Office Simon McDonald on Europe and how we work with his department. I saw a fabulous picture in Simon's office and (a personal highlight) finally got to meet Palmerston, the famous Foreign Office cat. To date he has caught 22 mice (though I'm told he is working to the outcome of a mice-free building, rather than a target).

If you're not familiar with this cute little ball of fluff (Palmertson, not Simon McDonald), you can follow him on Twitter - @DiploMog.

WIG Dinner

While in London, I also spoke at the Whitehall and Industry Group Dinner with senior executives from business and DGs from the UK Government. It was interesting and energising to be able to share what is going on here in Scotland, what the future might hold and how we prepare for it as leaders - and discuss the policy differences and approaches in Government north and south of the border. We need to continue to share Scottish Government's story as well as learning from those with interesting and relevant experience to share.

SOLACE

I was back in Scotland on Friday to join local authority Chief Executives at their regular Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) meeting. This kind of event represents a valuable opportunity to discuss, and invest in, the crucial relationship between the Scottish Government and local government. We spoke about current issues - the future shape of public service reform, Ministerial views on the future role of local government, tensions arising from education funding, tax raising power - and how we maintain open lines of communication and frank conversation during times when our relationship is under pressure.

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, [follow her on Twitter](#).....

Comments (13)

[REDACTED], here you go -

https://www.yammer.com/scotland.gsi.gov.uk/#!/threads/inGroup?type=in_group&feedId=8381139&view=all

" [REDACTED] Could you provide the link to Gingy's yammer page"

"Pictures on the wall - they have not had a "smarter workplace" makeover then. We just have blank white walls. "

[REDACTED], as am I. :-) I do love how TC is basically Bilko for kids."

"Twitter user @PoliticalPics, who is a Downing Street pool photographer, regularly documents the ongoing feud between Palmerston and Larry if anyone is looking for more coverage. (I'm a dog person, but I think Palmerston is the best Whitehall cat by far)"

[REDACTED] - yes, I know; I'm steeped in such trivial, sub-cultural ephemera. Just being my usual facetious self ;-)"

"But what was 'the fabulous picture in Simon's office'?"

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], the BBC used to call it 'Boss Cat' because there was a brand of cat food called 'Top Cat'. It no longer exists so the cartoon later on reverted to its correct name. Anybody who is a fan of 'The Phil Silvers' show can see how 'Top Cat' is based on it even down to the actor who played Doberman providing his voice for Benny the Ball (IIRC). :-)"

[REDACTED]

"That's a relief. As I read the first paragraph I thought the 'Top Cat' reference was presidential and wondered to which candidate the famous trash-can dwelling shyster was being likened."

[REDACTED]

"I believe you meant to say 'Boss Cat' there; that's how the BBC listed it, which is evidently the end of the matter."

[REDACTED]

"Sounds like a case for a secondment! :-)"

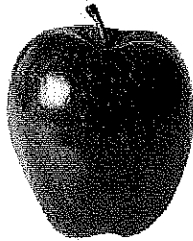
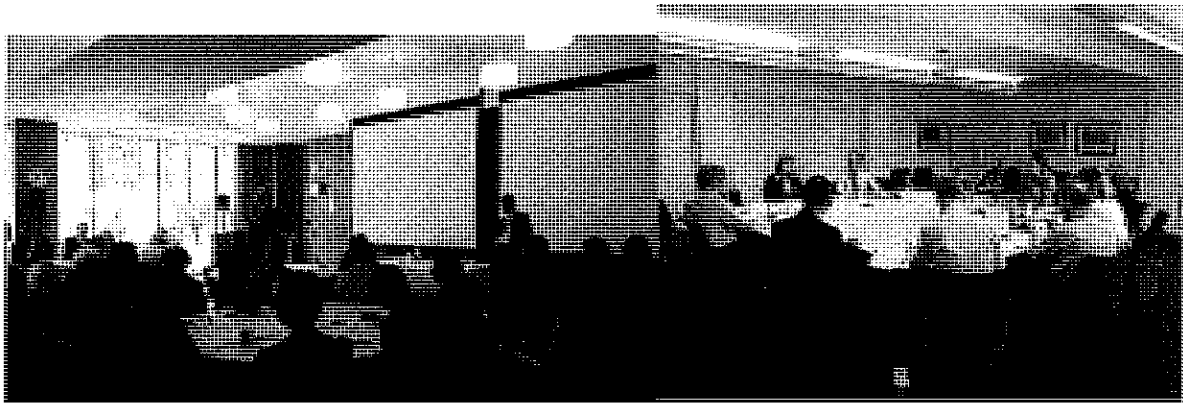
[REDACTED]

"Already a massive fan of @DiploMog especially love that all of Simon McDonald's overseas gifts now seem to be for Palmerston! I'm not sure why all the Government mogs are tomcats though, of my two it's the girl who is the real mouser and well ahead of 22...time for some gender equality in the HM Cat world?"

[REDACTED]

"I do like to look in on Palmerston's Twitter account, along with his other Whitehall feline colleagues occasionally. We do have our very own Top Cat in Saughton House, Gingy. He has his own Yammer page, but sadly has not been formally adopted, and regularly gets removed (presumably because he has no pass?). Perhaps Gingy could be a part-time equivalent to Palmerston?"

Leadership in a digital world



10/10/2016

Scottish Leaders Forum

I attended the annual Scottish Leaders Forum conference last week where the theme was 'disrupt or decline: - public service leadership in a digital world'.

Leaders from across Scotland's public sector, including members of our Executive Team, were asked to consider the question, "If Audit Scotland review the Scottish public sector in three years' time, will they find that the pace and scale of digital transformation has been enough to address the challenges we faced?".

Derek Mackay, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution, led a discussion on opportunities of digital in public service reform and it was interesting to hear a range of views from across the public sector about how digital can help us deliver better outcomes at lower costs.

Governance review in action

Last Tuesday saw the first of our new monthly Executive Board meetings. In case you missed the [Saltire article about this](#), the monthly Executive Board is part of the new structure which replaces the quarterly Strategic Board.


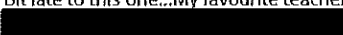
The general feeling was that our inaugural meeting was a strong start in the right direction, with more openness, but still with the element of 'challenge' from the three non-executive directors who attend.


World Teachers' Day


Last Wednesday was World Teachers' Day. I hope you all took a moment to think about the teachers who had an impact on your lives and to thank any teachers making a difference in your or your children's lives today. I was reminded of my mother, one of the most influential women in my life and herself a teacher. I'd be interested to hear a bit about your favourite teachers and what impact they had on you.

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, [follow her on Twitter](#).

Comments (9)

 17/10/2016 02:26 PM
Bit late to this one...My favourite teacher was the  using what was clearly now the "open the office door and first kid i see" technique, gave me the opportunity to do a bit of public speaking at 12/13 years old, as i became one of the speakers of the 1991 Edinburgh International Science Festival opening ceremony...It is something that has stood with me for years as a great moment for me, voice on the radio (which i still cringe about), face in the paper and more importantly a pass that got me into all of the events for free!!!

 13/10/2016 02:41 PM
My english teacher in an agricultural high school in France. Let's face it, english wasn't high on our list of priorities, but she was incredible, went off the government programme so many times just to get us to learn and progress. Probably never would have been that good in english without her. I still go and visit when I'm back home.

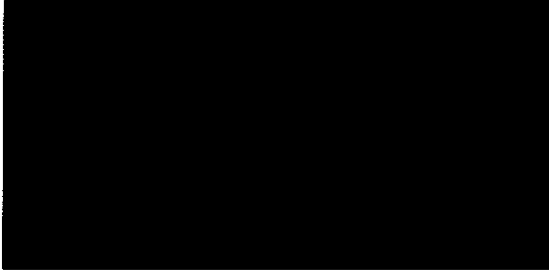
 12/10/2016 10:19 AM
On my first day in secondary school on the Isle of South Uist I was belted by my art teacher. He went on to become the most inspirational teacher I ever had. I met up with him after a break of 35 years, and he remains a dear friend.



[REDACTED] 12/10/2016 09:58 AM
[REDACTED] of New York City Public School #29, my teacher for 4th grade (that's age 9) definitely stands out as one of my favourites. He pushed us in maths, had us reading Animal Farm, and read aloud to us from Shakespeare and I remember thoroughly enjoying the whole year.



McLeod O (Olivia) 12/10/2016 09:06 AM



[REDACTED] 10/2016 02:05 PM
Apart from my Mum (English teacher) and my Dad (Techie teacher, late to the profession after shipbuilding), there was [REDACTED] who I had Maths for 3 years at secondary school. She maintained my poor interest level in the subject with her excellent teaching, dragging me reluctantly to a decent Higher, against the odds. Most importantly, she introduced me and many others at the school to orienteering, which led to fantastic adventures all over Scotland, the UK and eventually Europe. Thanks [REDACTED]



[REDACTED] 10/10/2016 04:05 PM
New Saltire, new (and improved) comments facility. Great work Future Saltire team!



[REDACTED] 10/10/2016 03:31 PM
Good to see comments enabled on new Saltire! :)

Innovate and inspire



24/10/2016

Celebrating success

Last week I was honoured to be part of the judging panel for the Civil Service Awards. It was great to find out about all the positive stories, learning and achievements from across the civil service.

The Civil Service Awards are a fantastic way of recognising and celebrating all the talented individuals and teams across government and I would encourage everyone to think about what innovative and inspiring projects they could enter next year.

I was also delighted to hear last week that Young Scot and the Scottish Government had won Best Use of Social Media at the Herald Scottish Digital Business Awards. The marketing campaign called 'A bad romance', highlighted the warning signs of child sexual exploitation

through the use of Snapchat. The campaign is a great example of the power of digital. Well done to all involved.

Going pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month

You may have noticed that St Andrew's House and Victoria Quay were lit up pink from Friday night until this morning.

This was to show support for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which takes place throughout October.

This worldwide annual campaign involves thousands of organisations, all with the shared goal of highlighting the importance of breast cancer awareness, education and research.

You can find out more [online](#) about the work the Scottish Government does through our Detect Cancer Early programme to improve survival for people with cancer in Scotland by diagnosing and treating the disease at an earlier stage.

Have your say

It's now the final week of the [2016 People Survey](#) with the online survey open until midnight on Monday 31 October.

As of Thursday 20 October, there had been 3,319 responses - or 55% of staff.

The survey is an important opportunity for people to share their experiences of working in the Scottish Government and to shape the future of the organisation. I would urge those who haven't yet done so to contribute their opinions and fill in the survey.

Referendum Bill consultation launches

Last week marked the launch of the [consultation paper](#) on the draft Referendum Bill. The draft bill proposes that any referendum would be run in a way similar to the 2014 referendum. Taking part in the consultation is an individual choice and guidance for staff responding is available on [Saltire](#).

EU discussions

On Friday I joined colleagues to prepare for the plenary session of the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), which is taking place in London today. Attended by the First Minister and the Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, as well as representatives from across the UK and devolved governments, the JMC offers another opportunity to discuss Scotland's place in Europe following the EU Referendum.

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, follow her on [Twitter](#)

Comments (0)

It takes two



31/10/2016



Encouraging two-way learning

Thursday was National Mentoring Day recognising and raising awareness of the benefits of mentoring in all its forms, and encouraging people to get involved.

For me, mentoring is about two-way learning. I first met my 'reverse mentor' Lauren Currie, back in November 2012. Lauren is a hugely talented young woman and, through our reverse mentoring approach, we regularly exchange communication methods, problem solving and creative thinking.

I am also a mentor for the Princes Trust, supporting young people with troubled backgrounds - a very different but equally satisfying experience.

Giving good feedback

Thursday's Directors' Network discussed the benefits of valuable feedback, and I shared my feedback and how I respond to it. Feedback is part of good performance management but equally shapes our culture and supports our SG2020 vision of being a more open, responsive and capable organisation. It was interesting to hear people's personal experiences of feedback in different forms. We're currently in the middle of the in-year review period and with the People Survey closing today, I would ask everyone to think about how to provide and receive honest feedback.

We believe in you

I met with [REDACTED] - an inspiring young woman on Thursday evening when I spoke at the Dinner with Dialogue event hosted by the Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum (STAF) to mark National Care Leavers Week. We heard compelling accounts of experience in care; including the frustration and disappointment of transient adults in their lives and their need for a consistent and trustworthy adult with whom they can share their journey.

STAF work with care leavers to help them transition to adulthood and independent living. These young people need us to believe in them, and to value them.

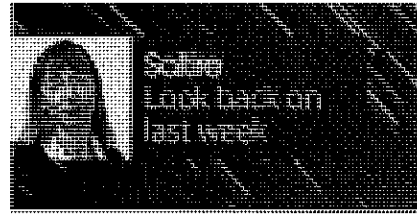
Building our working capabilities

The senior team from the Cabinet Office travelled to Scotland for their first meeting outside London on Wednesday. I met with Chief Executive of the Civil Service, John Manzoni, and hosted a dinner and a reception for our colleagues.

The focus of our conversation was on building devolution and intergovernmental working capability. It was good to share our experiences, thoughts and ideas.

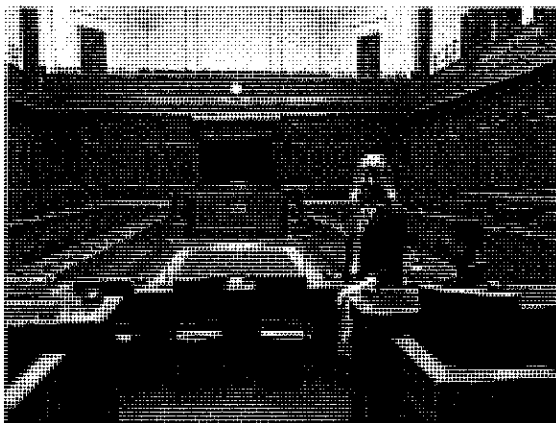
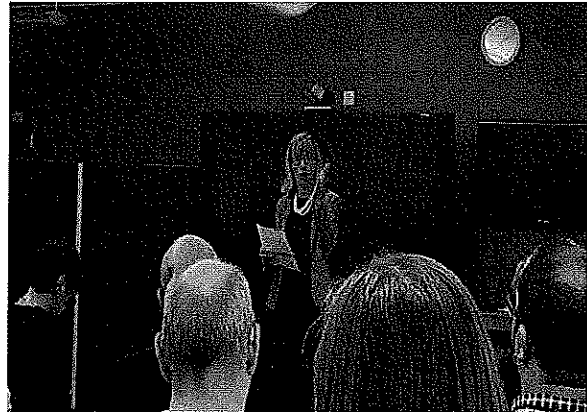
For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, follow her on [Twitter](#).

Comments (0)



Sharing and remembering

07/11/2016



Civil Service Interchange

This week kicked off with me welcoming job shadowing colleagues from the UK and Welsh Governments as part of the Civil Service Interchange. They were keen to learn (and share) learning in this way, and looking forward to FMQs as part of the programme.

Lest We Forget

St Andrew's House and Victoria Quay were lit red to mark the start of this year's poppy appeal. I'm sure it prompted many to take a moment to reflect on those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, which we shall mark on Armistice Day and at SAH on Remembrance Sunday.

Disability Confident

Alongside my fellow Permanent Secretaries, I'm proud to have signed the Scottish Government up as a Disability Confident employer.

The new scheme helps employers assess how Disability Confident their business is, accessing advice and guidance and encouraging them to share their evidence and experience, as well as facilitating continuous improvement.

Equal and Proud

On Thursday I spoke at the relaunch of the LGBTI Network about Scottish Government's ambition to create workplaces where all staff can bring their whole self to work (and reminisced about the rain at Glasgow's Pride march!)

Join me

My reverse mentor Lauren Currie recently introduced me to the We are up front initiative, which aims to build people's confidence about appearing onstage. The concept is simple: a speaker invites a handful of people to join them onstage during a speech to get an experience of being in front of a large crowd without having to speak.

On Monday 21 November, I'll be speaking at the Equality Unit's Equal Scotland Live event for equality practitioners across Scotland's public sector in Glasgow. Would you be interested in joining me onstage? If so, please speak to your line manager and send a short email (no more than 100 words) to [REDACTED] by Friday (11 November), explaining why you'd like to be #upfront and how it supports your personal learning plan.

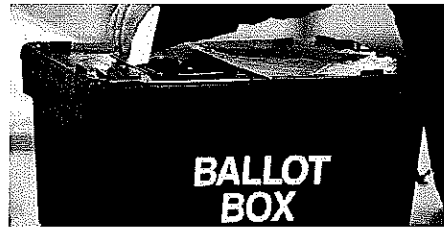
Going Home

I rounded the week off with a homecoming of sorts - a visit to my birthplace of Northern Ireland to give a 'masterclass' on diversity and inclusive leadership in the context of an outcomes approach and our National Performance Framework. It was also a chance to meet the NI senior management team and have useful dialogue with academic experts on Europe whilst there - a great end to the week.

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, [follow her on Twitter](#).

Comments (0)

Busy week, home and abroad



14/11/2016

Committee appearance

Last Thursday morning I appeared before the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee (PAPLS) in my capacity as Principal Accounting Officer, alongside fellow Scottish Government colleagues Alyson Stafford, Nicky Richards, Anne Moises, and Aileen Wright to answer questions on the Scottish Government annual consolidated accounts. This is an important part of our accountability and accounting practice and will become even more significant as we become a tax-raising body. It also reflects our SG2020 vision of being an 'open, responsive and capable' organisation and I touched on this in my response to the committee. Preparation for this day was a team effort - thank you to everyone who helped pull the briefings and information together.

Across the pond

It would be impossible for me to 'look back on last week' without mentioning the US presidential election. We are all subject to the Civil Service Code and its values of honesty, impartiality, objectivity and integrity. But it's equally important for each of us to stay well informed about politics and that means Scottish Government staff maintaining levels of political acuity. This subject came up in the staff engagement events which I hosted with the First Minister in June prior to the EU referendum, where both the First Minister and I

emphasised the importance of our awareness of the political context. Events last week underline the impact of international politics, not least as the geo-political climate continues to shape Scotland's future.

CEO sleep-out

I have signed up to take part in Social Bite's CEO Sleep-Out, along with at least 100 Scottish business leaders. We will be braving a cold Scottish winter's night on 15 December to raise funds for Scotland's most vulnerable people and Social Bite's work in helping them find their feet. All funds raised through the event go to breaking the cycle of homelessness for good. I'll be undertaking fundraising over the next month. There is absolutely no pressure to give - many of you are already supporting good causes in kind or cash - but if you're interested in donating, please feel free to visit my [Just Giving page](#) - all donations are welcome no matter how small.

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, follow her on [Twitter](#).

Comments (3)



[REDACTED] 15/11/2016 11:09 AM

It would be interesting to know how many business leaders own second homes and how second home ownership, generally has an effect on homelessness.

Is there a case for banning second homes or perhaps bringing in regulation? I understand there are many reasons for second home ownership which perhaps should also be explored. I am not sure of all the ins and outs re various scandinavian countries regulating second home ownership. It would also be interesting to see how their model impacts homelessness. Also interesting that some say Internet access is a right but not a home.



[REDACTED] 15/11/2016 10:23 AM

I think the Buchan Observer ran a story recently entitled "Aberdeenshire business owner wins Presidential election - local news at its best."

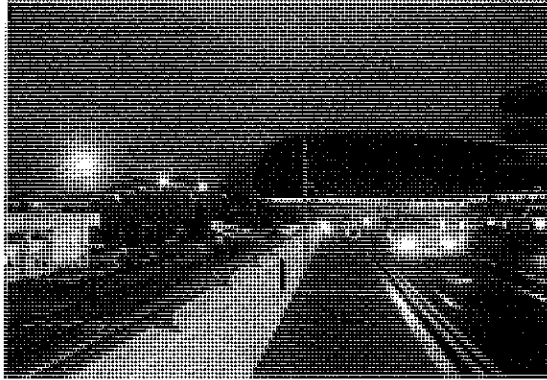


[REDACTED] 5/11/2016 08:58 AM

On the subject of the US Presidential elections and committee appearances, I think Donald Trump must be the first major world leader to have appeared at a Scottish Parliamentary committee? (certainly from outside the UK - I can't remember if any of David Cameron, Gordon Brown or Tony Blair ever did.)



On the road again



21/11/2016

Last week began with an early morning flight for a very productive trip to Dublin. I was delighted to visit the Scottish Government Dublin 'Hub' located in the UK Embassy, see the Scottish artwork on the walls, and meet our energetic and well-networked team there: [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

My meetings were with the UK Ambassador, European Movement Ireland - a not-for-profit, membership-based organisation working to develop the connection between Ireland and Europe - and senior civil servants from the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Discussions focused on the impact of Brexit but also how we strengthen the relationship between Scotland and Ireland, including in areas such as culture, diaspora engagement, innovation, public health, research and higher education.

I also met with Martin Fraser, Secretary-General to Irish Government and Head of the Irish Civil Service, which was a good opportunity to exchange views and experience on Government, public sector finances, the economy, gender balance and inclusivity in top teams and leading change.

People Survey

Our top level People Survey results published on Saltire last Wednesday. 4,515 responses were received from staff across Scottish Government Core Directorates - giving us an overall response rate of 73%. Some headlines stats included: 77% of respondents said they have monthly conversations with their manager, with 81% finding it useful - up two percentage points on last year. And our 'engagement index' score - a measure of employee pride, motivation, attachment and commitment to the organisation - remains the same as in 2015 at 62%.

The People Survey is an opportunity for us to have our say and help become the organisation we need and want to be, in line with our SG2020 vision. To everyone who took part in the

survey this year - thank you, your voice has been heard. To those who didn't - I'd encourage you to get involved in opportunities to share your views and concerns, whether through team discussions, as part of SG2020 work, or through regular events, such as Ask ET and Ask DG.

Discussions on policy making

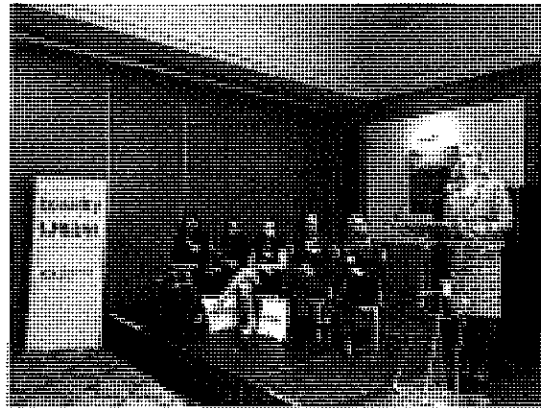
I was pleased to have been invited to join University of Cambridge's Policy Leaders' Fellowship. On Friday, I went to Cambridge to take part in my first roundtable. The Fellows are from academia, think tanks, Parliament and Government and they meet three times a year to share thinking, learning and evidence on policy areas. Friday's meeting was about Future Cities, but the plenary discussions were supplemented by short one to one interviews with Cambridge academics, each top in their field, addressing three or four questions of my choice. Mine were: the relationship between the individual and the small nation state, diversity and gender balance in organisational culture, social implications of automation, and the technologies now in the lab that policy makers should understand and anticipate. What a privilege it was - and I'll be sharing some of the thinking from these exchanges in the near future.

And meanwhile, during my time at the policy seminar, I got up close with a beautiful Siberian Eagle Owl - but that is another story!

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, follow her on [Twitter](#).

Comments (0)

Upfront and on the continent



Leslie Evans
@PermSecScot

Follow

Great way to highlight importance of giving back. Inspired to get involved & also looking forward to upcoming @SocialBite_ #CEOsleepout



About Scotland @AboutScotland

Share the spirit of our patron saint this St Andrew's Day (November 30th) and 'Give 30 minutes for the 30th' #ourst Andrewsday

28/11/2016

Upfront in Glasgow

I started last week in Glasgow at the Equality Unit's first Equal Scotland Live conference, where I addressed around 200 equality practitioners from Scotland's public sector.

My speech focused on diversity and leadership and how the Scottish Government is embracing fairness, diversity and inclusion as a vital part of being a credible public organisation. I shared my own experience to illustrate my belief that diversity is personal - as opposed to an abstract policy or set of rules - and that our views and actions on diversity and equality are shaped by our personal experiences.

The conference also gave me the opportunity to take part in the Upfront initiative, which I wrote about a few weeks ago. I was delighted to be joined on stage by Uzma Khan from the Office of the Chief Economist, [REDACTED], an inspirational young woman who I met at a recent dinner during Care Leavers Week, and three conference attendees. If you have an upcoming opportunity to address a conference, I would urge you to look into the Upfront initiative and find out how you can help people boost their confidence in public speaking.

Brussels

On Wednesday I was in Brussels with Mike Neilson in his new post as Director for Brussels and the team at the Scottish Government's Brussels office. I met with Alexander Italianer, Secretary General, European Commission as well as Scotland Europa. In the evening, I

hosted a reception for the Edinburgh International Festival's 70th Anniversary next year. Brussels colleagues are acutely aware that many more of us are engaged in EU issues now. I suggest someone in your team gets in touch with [Mike](#) or his team to find out more about their work and how they might help.

[#ourstandrewsday](#)

In case you missed it, the Scottish Government Marketing Team kicked off their [#ourstandrewsday campaign](#) last week as part of the 'Scotland's Winter Festivals' programme. I was happy to promote this campaign, which urges everyone to share in the spirit of Scotland's patron saint and 'give 30 minutes for the 30th'. The Scottish Government's [paid special leave entitlement for volunteering](#) has increased to three days per year - so I hope this campaign will inspire you to use that leave for good causes throughout the year if you're not already doing so. I am looking forward to my own Winter fundraiser in a couple of weeks' time, Social Bite's CEO sleepout.

To contribute to the Perm Sec's fundraising efforts for her participation in Social Bite's CEO sleepout, visit her [Just giving page](#).

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, follow her on [Twitter](#).

Comments (0)

Building (and baking) for the future



05/12/2016

Delivering positive patient care

On Monday I visited the [Royal Edinburgh Hospital](#) with Chief Nursing Officer Fiona McQueen to learn about the Prince's Trust '[Get into Health Care Programme](#)' in partnership with NHS Lothian. The programme supports young people into employment - in this case with opportunities to go further and study for graduate level qualifications. I met with those responsible for introducing and operating this scheme and with [REDACTED] herself on the scheme, now assisting in theatre.

I donned my hard hat to see inside the new building at Royal Edinburgh Hospital - almost complete and very impressive. It will provide high tech residential care and facilities.

I also spent time with NHS Lothian School Nurses learning about their work and how it contributes to wider government policies - not least Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and closing the attainment gap. Great to meet such a very energetic and committed team - I promised to see them again at one of their schools next.

Directors' Quarterly

On Thursday I hosted Directors' Quarterly - our traditional end of year session where we reflect and take stock as a leadership group. We reflected on how it felt after a very eventful and busy year. We re-connected with the strategic drivers underpinning SG2020, what the People Survey told us about people's understanding of SG2020 and what this tells us about our leadership and engagement with our teams. We considered the fiscal and economic implications of being a tax raising and spending government and what that means for each and every Scottish Government policy and operational team. We also raised £90 for St Columba's Hospice from our bake sale - that is quite a lot of cake...

Sugar and spice and all things nice

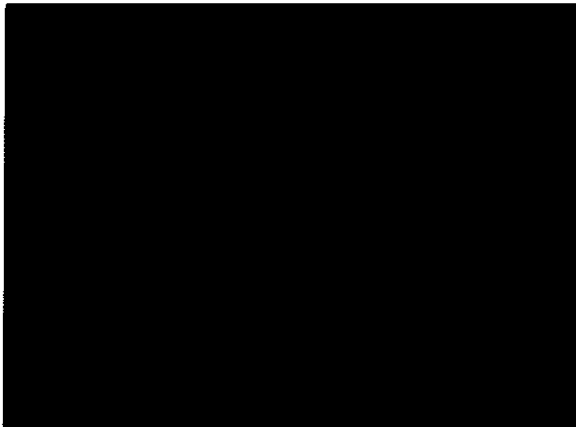
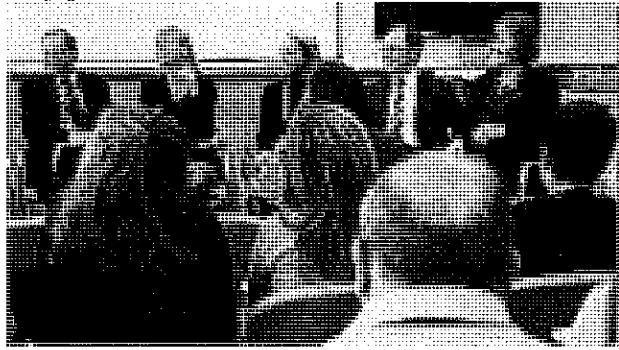
On 15 December I will be joining around 250 business leaders from across Scotland in Social Bite's CEO Sleep Out. The charity provides food, support and jobs to homeless people. This year Social Bite plan to build a village with houses from shipping containers for 20 homeless individuals to live for 12 months.

I am raising funds via JustGiving, and today I'll be holding a Bake Sale at 2pm on the first floor, north corridor, St Andrew's House. Please come and buy! My thanks to all who have taken the time to donate so far.

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, follow her on Twitter.

Comments (0)

Taking a collaborative approach



 **Leslie Evans** (Profile picture) [Follow](#)

Encouraging a new style of leadership to help Scotland become the best place in the world for children to grow up -

Looking after future generations
Last month Scotland celebrated its first ever national Adoption Week and, as a champion for our young people, this is a topic close to my heart. I recently spoke at an event hosted by Stat, a

by @scotlandsgov

44 58 

7:45 AM - 6 Dec 2016



12/12/2016

Ask ET

On Monday the Executive Team hosted a very productive Ask ET session at Saughton House. We had lots of great questions including - how can we build on feedback from the People Survey, how can we learn more from other directorates and how can we maintain high levels of personal and team resilience? It was also interesting to hear the Executive Team's own highs and lows from throughout 2016. For me, a high was going to the top of the middle tower of the new Queensferry Crossing, as well as taking the First Minister through her thoughts following the election in May. For others, adjusting to new roles, and working with new colleagues and Ministers was both challenging and rewarding.

Sweet treats for a good cause

A big thank you to everyone who helped with my bake sale in aid of [Social Bite's CEO Sleep Out](#) - whether that was by donating baked goods, buying a cake, or helping man the busy stall.

The bake sale was a fantastic success with some delicious cakes on offer. They really did go as fast as hot cakes with the total raised coming to an impressive £355.

As well as hosting the bake sale I have also been raising funds ahead of the CEO Sleep Out via [JustGiving](#) and I am very thankful for the generosity of everyone who has donated.

Working in partnership

On Tuesday night I attended an Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations (ACOSVO) dinner in Glasgow. During the evening we discussed the importance of third sector organisations being seen as leaders in their fields and agents of change. The shifting public service landscape, with new tax and welfare powers, means we all have to evolve and we all have to do it together. As discussed on the night, as part of this the third sector has a crucial role to play in delivering the change we need.

Committee appearance

On Thursday morning I appeared before the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee (PAPLS) in my capacity as Principal Accounting Officer, alongside fellow Scottish Government colleagues Liz Ditchburn, Nicky Richards, Anne Moises and Elinor Mitchell to answer questions on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Futures programme.

This is an important part of our accountability practice and as I said in my opening remarks, we have learned from the CAP Futures programme but there is absolutely no room for complacency. We remain vigilant on the quality and responsiveness of the services all involved receive.

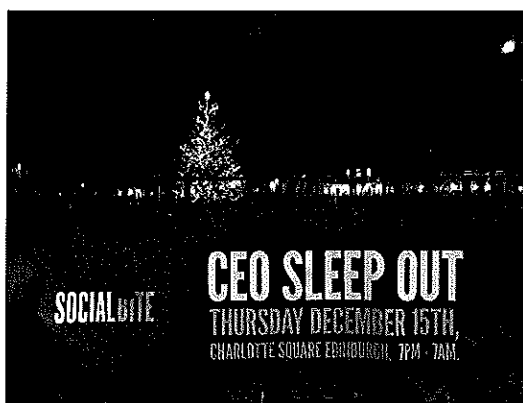
Making Scotland the best place to grow up

Last week I [tweeted](#) about my recent Civil Service Leaders [blog](#) on encouraging a new style of leadership in order to make Scotland the best place for all children to grow up in. This is a collaborative leadership approach which is human, inclusive, open, agile and authentic.

For more on the Perm Sec's weekly engagements, follow her on [Twitter](#).

Comments (0)

Video diary from CEO Sleep Out



19/12/2016

CEO sleepout

Last Thursday, I took part in Social Bite's CEO Sleep Out. I spent the night camped out in Charlotte Square, along with more than 200 business leaders from across Scotland, to raise awareness and funds to help tackle homelessness.

The weather, noise, exposure and discomfort of sleeping rough – just for one night – gave us a glimpse of what it's like.

It was an eye-opening and inspiring event – and it highlighted the importance of work undertaken by organisations like Social Bite to help tackle homelessness and its knock on effects. We heard from people first-hand who had benefitted from Social Bite's support. There were people from public, private and third sector – I met colleagues from higher education, youth services, local authorities, digital and business communities.

Social Bite's fundraising target was £500,000. With the funds raised, they plan to build a village with houses built from shipping containers, for 20 homeless individuals to live for 12 months. The village will not only put roofs over people's heads but will also be paired with full support to help them get back on their feet.

Taking part in the sleep out is a gesture, but the money raised will fund this important work and help support long-term solutions to homelessness.

Many thanks to everyone who made a donation – your donations helped me raise £2,432.00 for this worthy cause.

You can watch my video diary from the night below.

Comments (8)



22/12/2016 01:03 PM

I am glad someone also mentioned the Rock Trust sleep out from a few weeks ago, indeed it was the second such sleep out within a matter of weeks organised by the Rock Trust. The work this charity does is exceptional, and some of the stories I hear regarding the young homeless people in Edinburgh and the Lothians is heart-breaking. It is massively important that the work that these smaller charities do is highlighted since, like you say, they don't have the media exposure that some other charities benefit from.



20/12/2016 04:44 PM

It's a good cause. I support "streetwork", an Edinburgh based charity that aims to get homeless people back into the mainstream of society and deal with many of the issues that cause people to be homeless. It's a complex issues and sorting the underlying causes gives people a better chance of staying off the street <http://www.streetwork.org.uk/> for more info



Gray P (Paul) (Health) 19/12/2016 04:23 PM

Great initiative Leslie - and the video really gives added insight. But as you say, sleeping rough is a reality for some people night after night. All the more reason and motivation for public services to work together, with people who really understand this issue, to support the changes that make it less likely in future.



19/12/2016 01:45 PM

Well done Leslie. What a brilliant initiative to raise funds and highlight the plight that the homeless face everyday. You have set a precedent.....



19/12/2016 01:15 PM

Why not use this link and give £5 to buy Christmas dinner for a homeless person in Scotland and help fund The Social Bite Village to break the cycle of homelessness. I've bought a few as presents for friends.
<https://www.itison.com/Edinburgh/deals/buy-a-homeless-person-xmas-dinner-at-social-bite>



19/12/2016 12:43 PM

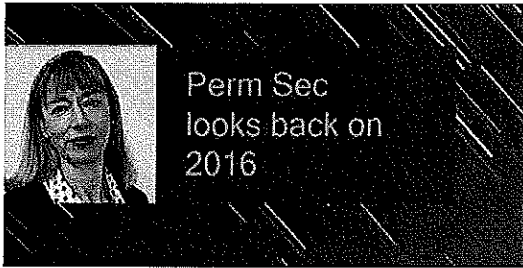
Really powerful stuff Leslie. Thanks for raising profile.



Allison B (Barbara) 19/12/2016 09:58 AM

Well done Leslie. A great cause. The event got a lot of media coverage and raised the issue of homelessness to a wider audience. Are you planning to do it again next year?!

Looking back on 2016



22/12/2016

Video diary from Leslie Evans

2016 has been a positive but challenging year which tested our resilience and flexibility. We have worked hard to deliver an ambitious Programme for Government reflecting the priorities of the First Minister. We have also celebrated a number of successes both internally and externally.

I want to thank each and every one of you for your hard work and dedication. Please do make the most of a well-earned break over the festive period and I look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Comments (0)

Professionalism at its best



16/01/2017

Returning to work following the winter festivities is a good time to take stock and look to the year ahead, including what we each want and need to achieve personally, professionally and in delivering for the Scottish Government.

I shared my three priorities for 2017 at last week's Directors' Network – Scotland's economy, relationship with Europe and ensuring high quality and consistent management at all levels of the organisation. As well as being the Chinese Year of the Cockerel, for me, 2017 will be the Year of the Manager.

Good management will equip each of us with the skills, confidence and resilience to navigate through 2017 with all its challenges and unknowns. Indeed, good management is an essential foundation for each of us to lead in these VUCA - volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous - times. 2016 lived up to this description and the result of the EU Referendum will continue to resonate throughout 2017.

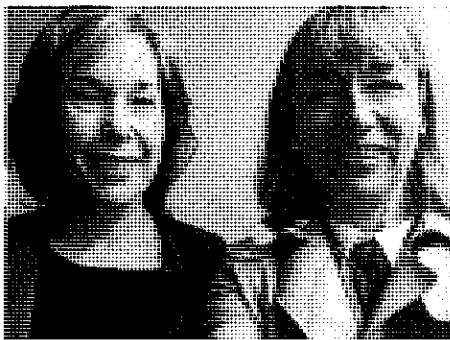
I am proud of, but not surprised by, the response of Scottish Government teams to this new and evolving context. Civil servants and their role in EU negotiations have come under media scrutiny recently and no doubt this will continue. In his recent [Herald opinion piece](#), former Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill praised the advice and support of the civil servants he encountered during his time in the Scottish Government. He described the impartiality and professionalism of staff working on policies and interventions, including the referendum on independence.

This article provides an alternative narrative to recent commentary on the UK Civil Service, and one more akin to my own 16 years in the Scottish Government. I am regularly impressed and assured at how our civil service values of honesty, objectivity, integrity and impartiality are reflected in the flexible, creative and skilled approach and advice offered by staff, often in response to new, testing, fast-moving and unpredictable conditions.

Indeed the First Minister spoke recently of 'shining examples' of this kind of responsive, agile support. But there is no room for complacency. The year ahead will be challenging, with its own share of uncertainty and complexities, not least as the Scottish Government budget and our capacity to deploy new powers to best effect is now dependent on income from taxation in Scotland. SG2020 is surely our 'North Star' here. As professional 21st century civil servants we each have a role to play in helping the Scottish Government become the organisation we need and want to be – open, responsive and capable. And ready for whatever 2017 brings.

Comments (0)

All in a week's work



23/01/2017

In my last [blog for Saltire](#) I talked about the importance of being ready to adapt and work flexibly as situations evolve and external change demands. In the past week I saw good examples of the need for us to be the responsive, open and capable organisation which SG2020 describes.

EU negotiations

Nowhere is this more apparent than the rapidly evolving circumstances of the UK's future relationship with the European Union. The Prime Minister set out her priorities on how the UK leaves the EU last week. This speech dominated discussion at the meeting of all Permanent Secretaries which I attend each week in Whitehall. The Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Mr Russell, attended the Joint Ministerial Committee on European Negotiations JMC (EN) to discuss the Scottish Government's recent paper – Scotland's Place in Europe.

Meanwhile a majority of the Scottish Parliament voted for a motion which agreed that 'alternative approaches within the UK should be sought that could enable Scotland to retain our place within the single market'. Officials across the organisation are supporting Scottish Government Ministers in this fast-paced, ever-changing environment – demonstrating responsive policy teamwork.

Workplace equality

I was very proud to learn we had re-entered the Stonewall UK Workplace Equality Index (WEI) of top 100 employers – this represents real progress in becoming a more open organisation. The Scottish Government is now ranked 50th on the WEI which is a movement of 163 places in two years. Great

progress - but there is still more to do to ensure our organisation is one of the best and most open places to work.

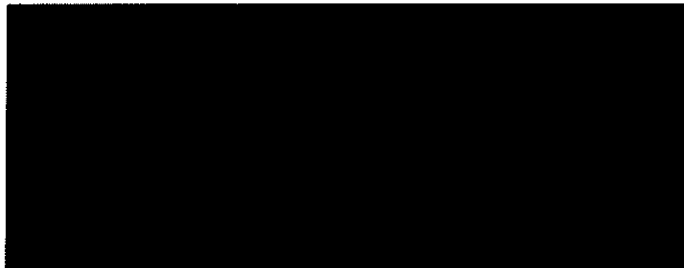
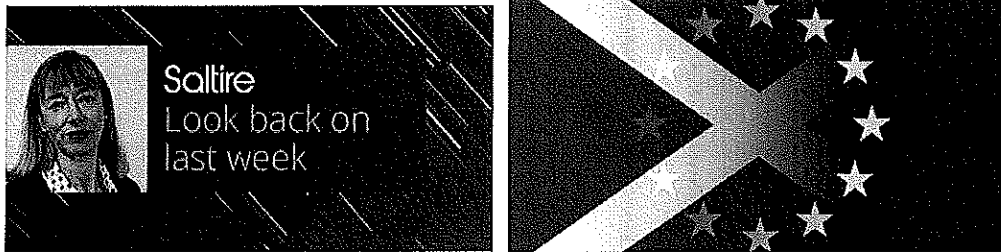
Making Scotland the best place to grow up

I met with Jennifer Davidson, Executive Director of the new Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures, based at Strathclyde University and bringing together the expertise of the Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children (CELCIS) and that of the Centre for Children and Young People's Criminal Justice (CYCJ). Scottish Government colleagues are working closely with CELCIS and others to deliver the independent root-and-branch review of the care system recently announced by the First Minister.

Partnership work with CELCIS is a good example of the Scottish Government developing its capability – we need the expertise, scrutiny and independent voices of others to supplement our own skills and knowledge, and ensure the relevance and responsiveness of our work. I'm always pleased to see teams making and protecting time to forge, and invest in effective relationships with individuals and organisations in this way.

Comments (0)

Delivering through complexity and uncertainty



30/01/2017

Scotland's Place in Europe

Last week's Supreme Court ruling on Article 50 meant Brexit continued to dominate the news agenda and brought constitutional issues into even sharper focus. These issues will be front and centre at the Joint Ministerial Committee in Cardiff which I am attending with ministers today (Monday).

The latest developments on Europe, including the Prime Minister's keynote speech, have given clarification to the UK Government's position.

While negotiations remain challenging for all involved, in Scotland the picture is even more complex. 'Scotland's Place in Europe', published in December, sets out the Scottish Government's position following the result of the EU Referendum. And as the First Minister has made clear, the option of a second referendum on independence remains on the table if a distinctive solution for Scotland including staying in the European single market is not pursued seriously by the UKG.

So the challenge facing us in Scotland is both complex and uncertain.

Meanwhile we continue to focus on delivering the ambitious Programme for Government, SG2020 work, and in particular, matching resources to priorities, remains as important as ever.

Honest conversations

All of this was the focus of an extended Directors' Network meeting last week. We had an honest conversation about how the current complexity and uncertainty feels for everyone in the organisation right now, about what it might mean for our current organisational structure and ways of working, and implications for staff resources and workload. It is also the time in the business cycle to engage with budget planning and options for 2017/18.

The importance of prioritisation, flexibility, and the efficient and effective use of resources, also came up last week when I attended the regular weekly ministerial meeting in parliament with Barbara Allison. Ministers spoke warmly of the quality of support from their teams. And they also identified specific issues where they needed us to provide a different style of support and service. This included comms – especially our use of digital - much more concise briefing, creative and credible alternative policy options, better awareness of parliamentary process and pressures and more political acuity. Barbara is taking this forward with teams and I shall be returning later in the year to hear if ministers have noticed a difference.

Celebrating success

The Rio Tinto reception was a timely opportunity to thank colleagues for their role in securing the future of the Fort William smelter. The system produces around 48,000 tonnes of aluminium each year and employs around 160 people, providing a significant boost to the Scottish and rural economy. Staff worked around the clock to safeguard the smelter's future, demonstrating real commitment, resilience and capability.

Comment (1)



██████████ 30/01/2017 01:10 PM

Nice to see some good news surrounding the protection of jobs in Scottish industry. It makes a welcome change from hearing about job losses every time you turn on the tv.

Our approach to inclusive growth



06/02/2017

Last week I attended the Joint Ministerial Committee in Cardiff. Discussions on economic interests led me to reflect on the delivery of our economic strategy.

Inclusive growth - economic growth that boosts economic sustainability and distributes the dividends of prosperity more fairly - is at the heart of our ambitious Programme for Government. Once the Scotland Act 2016 powers are fully devolved, approximately half of devolved expenditure in Scotland will be funded by devolved or assigned tax revenue – meaning inclusive growth is a priority that must underpin our focus and policies across the organisation.

The fundamentals of our economy are strong. We have substantial natural resources, one of the most highly educated workforces in Europe, and a long standing reputation for innovation and an internally-recognised brand. Scotland's universities are world-renowned, and we are world leaders in key industries of the future, such as life sciences, financial services and financial technology, creative industries and sustainable tourism.

While this is promising, there is no doubt businesses in Scotland, as elsewhere, have faced increased uncertainty in the months following the EU referendum result. In addition, almost half a million households still live in relative poverty after housing costs, and levels of income, wealth and health inequalities are high by advanced economy standards.

Inclusive growth offers us an opportunity to create a growing economy in Scotland where all can prosper and inequalities are reduced: a growing private sector and more socially responsible corporate culture; more flourishing social enterprises; higher productivity and quality jobs; and more progression opportunities in work.

To improve our approach to inclusive growth across the organisation, we will need to consider our culture, systems and ways of working.

We've already started to ensure better prioritisation of spend around inclusive growth priorities. We have examined numerous potential inclusive growth drivers – and identified a number of areas as national-level priorities, including inequality of caring responsibilities, lack of take up of digital opportunities, and inequalities in health. Thus policies in areas such as childcare can be thought of as economic policies, supporting inclusive growth, as much as social policies. Recent budget decisions – including those to make our tax regime more progressive – will lead to a shift in wealth distribution.

An Economic Policy Unit has been established to support a coordinated approach to the implementation of inclusive growth across the organisation as part of our economic strategy. And new innovation and investment hubs in Brussels, Dublin, London and Berlin are being established to promote our international outlook.

We know inclusive growth will continue to underpin our priorities, and we must ensure we are open, capable and responsive in our approach to delivery.

I'd welcome thoughts from others on this - what does your area contribute to a sustainable, inclusive and vibrant economy?

Comments (5)



Anson S (Sam) 07/02/2017 11:48 AM
Delighted to see Inclusive Growth being given prominence here, including the acknowledgement that well-designed economic and social policies can be mutually reinforcing. One of the things I'm interested in is how we assess the impact that policy options might have on IG, and how we ensure that is done consistently within and across portfolios? Similarly, what are our mechanisms to assure ourselves that those expected benefits are actually realised? In a world where financial constraints increasingly bite, how can we be confident we are directing resources to their most valuable use?



[Redacted] 07/02/2017 10:35 AM
Thank you for your suggestions. Lead policy teams are currently considering these issues.



[Redacted] 06/02/2017 05:09 PM
I think it's helpful to make this connection so clearly: unless we grow the Scottish economy, we won't generate the tax revenue to run the policies we currently invest and are invested in. It's a somewhat sobering thought though it's also helpful to realise that many existing policies can be reframed as supporting growth.



06/02/2017 01:20 PM

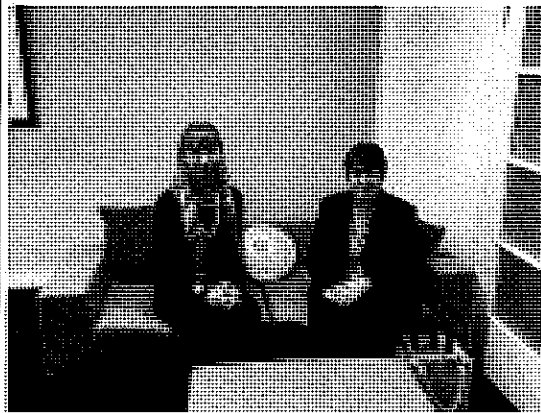
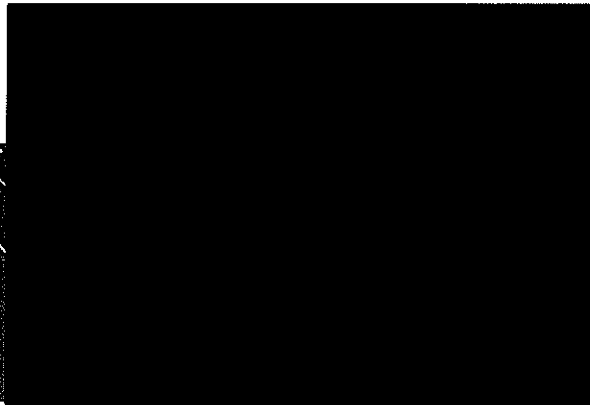
I would like to see the new Social Security agency being housed in an area of high unemployment that has seen a decrease in the number of public service jobs due to estates being decreased throughout the UK. This would help protect local jobs, the local economy and allow staff to continue working locally and allow them to maintain their work/life balance. Share any prosperity from the devolution of powers throughout Scotland and not keep them within the Glasgow/Edinburgh local. A good model would be the Accountant in Bankruptcy, which relocated from Edinburgh to Kilwinning and has allowed local civil servants to remain local civil servants in an area where "jobs of value" are scarce, and the local shops, transport links, restaurants, students (school work experience) and modern apprentices have all benefited.



06/02/2017 12:14 PM

I work with colleagues who support SEAS and ensure the (remarkably) prompt payment of invoices. They administer SEAS effectively and they work very hard to exceed the ministerial target for prompt payment. This makes a huge difference to the cash flow of our suppliers, in particular SMEs.

Communications and connectivity



13/02/17

Catch of the day

As part of Travelling Cabinets I always try to meet with local Scottish Government staff. Wild salmon, sea trout and salmon aquaculture were the focus of the day on Monday when I visited the Scottish Government's Marine Scotland Science Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory at Faskally. The base is home to 34 members of staff, including scientists, administrators and advisors.

I was reminded of the diverse roles of colleagues, not just working remotely but often in freezing and wet conditions. I promised to pursue the issues they raised with me, including accessing IT support and the corporate approach to contract services. The 'one size fits all' approach doesn't always work - and SG2020 is all about seeking flexible and responsive solutions.

I joined members of the Cabinet at Pitlochry Festival Theatre for the Travelling Cabinet public discussion. Questions included support for the rural economy, health, infrastructure, planning and Brexit.

I also try and meet the local authority Chief Executive during Travelling Cabinets. At my meeting with Perth and Kinross Council Chief Executive, Bernadette Malone, we talked about local services and finance but also about the induction planned for newly elected members following May's local government elections. These councillors will find themselves operating in a very particular public landscape, often in partnership with others - sometimes at a regional level, and frequently delivering services through arm's length bodies, for example, in the provision of health and social care.

Boosting digital capabilities


Not surprisingly digital connectivity was a key topic at the public discussion in Perth. Later in the week, I met [ScotlandIS](#) CEO, Polly Purvis. We spoke about our joint work to re-skill Scotland's workforce to ensure we are equipped to achieve our target of becoming a world-leading digital nation by 2020.

Scotland update

On Wednesday I attended the weekly meeting with Whitehall Permanent Secretary colleagues and gave an update on Scotland. I emphasised the distinctly different characteristics of Scotland, how these inform and shape different political, policy and delivery choices, and how my colleagues might stay abreast of Scotland's interests and perspective. I hope to welcome a number of Permanent Secretaries to Scotland with their senior teams in the coming months, to learn more about our work first-hand.

Comments (2)



 13/02/2017 02:26 PM
I think you mean Pedantry. *coughs*



Fraser L (Lesley) 13/02/2017 02:02 PM
Many thanks for the update, Leslie. Interesting to hear about your visit with Marine Scotland. Lots of Housing and Social Justice colleagues work outwith the central belt too - and we have a Directorate "Location Neutral" group helping us make the most of this more flexible approach. We'll get in touch with MS colleagues ...

Working with colleagues across the UK



27/02/2017

I spent most of last week in Whitehall – a big commitment – but one which I feel is increasingly important.

Women in Government event

On Tuesday evening, I attended a reception hosted by Her Majesty The Queen at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace. The event was to recognise and celebrate female Permanent Secretaries, past and present. There have been 35 Permanent Secretaries to date - I am number 30. It was a pleasure to meet former head of MI5 Dame Stella Rimington, as well as people who had supported my journey as a leader like Dame Helen Ghosh whom I shadowed when she was Permanent Secretary at the Home Office.

Also good to catch up with friends like those who organised the event - Mel and Sue as I call them - and very new Permanent Secretaries Shan Morgan (Welsh Government) and Antonia Romeo (Department for International Trade from March).

The event recognised the importance of women leaders and indeed the importance of promoting and championing diversity in the UK civil service overall – not just gender. We have a way to go before we see all our communities represented in the leadership of organisations.

Civil Service Board meeting

I am now a member of the Civil Service Board, responsible for the strategic leadership of the Civil Service, chaired by Head of the UK Civil Service, Sir Jeremy Heywood, and the Senior Leadership Committee which looks after the talent pipeline for Permanent Secretaries in the UK civil service.

I attended both for the first time on Wednesday. The agenda included our approach to increasing commercial skills in the civil service, the future of digital platforms and increasing diversity in our leadership drawing on evidence based analysis. Information about the [Civil Service Board](#) is available on the UK Government website.

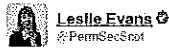
Cambridge Policy Leaders' Fellowship

I took part in the University of Cambridge's Policy Leaders' Fellowship on Friday. As previously mentioned Fellows are from academia, think tanks and government and meet three times a year to share thinking, learning and evidence on key policy areas. In this session we addressed social cohesion, both in the light of the election of President Trump and the Brexit result (and evidence about economic and identity politics), and in the wider sense – the coherence of our communities (research about the multiple groups with which people identify, and how this shapes behaviours).

I also had the opportunity to talk with academics on specific topics – borders, alternatives to GDP measurement and horizon scanning. Very stimulating but also a very good way to meet people with expertise which is relevant and useful to Scottish Government ambitions and interests.

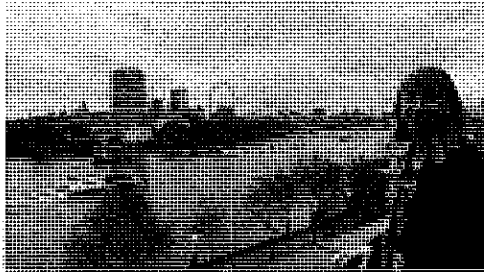
Comments (0)

Ready for action



Leslie Evans
Permanent Secretary

View from @scotgov first permanent base in London #scotlandhouse #teamscotland @ScotDevInt @scotent @VisitScotland



06/03/2017

Addressing industrial challenges

On Wednesday I met with Alex Chisholm, Permanent Secretary to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to discuss joint working between the UK and Scottish Governments. We agreed the importance of Scottish Government and Scottish business informing BEIS's industrial strategy, currently out to consultation. Scottish Government officials are looking at how a joint event in Glasgow could provide an opportunity for Scottish business sectors to hear about, and give views on, BEIS policy and the drafting of the industrial strategy.

London Hub

On Wednesday evening I was proud to speak at the event to open the building housing Scottish Government's first permanent base in London – the new Innovation and Investment Hub, based at Victoria Embankment. Scotland House will provide Scottish companies with a place to meet clients and customers, target new markets and secure investment. It will also accommodate Team Scotland - representatives of our enterprise, tourism and investment agencies - and provide hot desk services for Scottish Government officials and Ministers when in London. This Hub is one of four, with others in Dublin, Brussels and (soon to be) Berlin. It will play an important role in attracting investment to Scotland and helping businesses to trade internationally.

EU readiness

At Directors' Network, External Affairs colleagues led a discussion on the implications of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. With Article 50 due to be triggered this month, we discussed demands on the

Scottish Government over the next two years, including key milestones and external influences and events.

Directors shared how they are defining and addressing the support and resources required to respond to the challenges ahead. This experience has informed a corporate planning pack to enable a consistent approach to EU and constitutional issues and enable us to monitor and assess levels of preparation and readiness. This discussion is just one element of work underway but represents another step forward in our preparedness.

Working together

Several conversations this week highlighted the importance of alerting key colleagues early on so that ministers receive timely, well informed and joined up advice and options. Scottish Government Legal Department, Finance, the Office of the Chief Economic Adviser, Chief Scientific Adviser, Communications, the First Minister's policy unit and special advisers all have roles here - but they need to be brought in at a sufficiently early stage of development.



08/03/2017 08:48 AM

But will you have a Friday afternoon gin club with views over Horse Guards?! It does feel a shame that we won't be sharing the same space as our friends in the Scotland Office. But I'm sure the new place will be useful and very welcoming too, and I'll pop in when we go to see our colleagues in London. Thanks.



Rollison R (Richard) 07/03/2017 08:48 PM

at some point soon I'm afraid you'll no longer be able to put your briefcase down in Dover House. We have nice places to put your briefcase in Scotland House though.



07/03/2017 08:42 AM

I do hope we'll still be welcome at Dover House. It is quite a nice spot to put your briefcase down for an hour.



Rollison R (Richard) 06/03/2017 01:43 PM

Simon - re London Hub there's still a bit more practical work to be done before its fully operational. We'll be putting something on Saltire over the next couple of weeks. In the meantime you might want to look at

<http://qlnk.io/q/58b57d9ee4b032fd5bce4ebc> or

<https://youtu.be/GzLTlohGsQA>

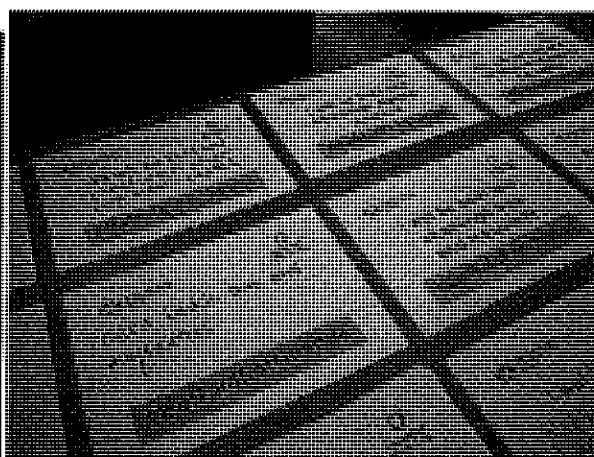
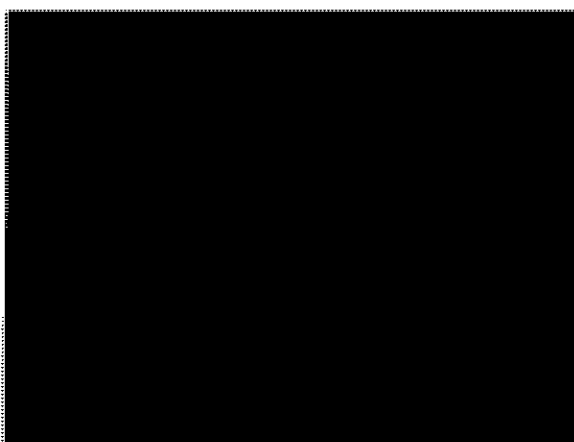
For now, stick with Dover House - but not for much longer. RR



[REDACTED] 06/03/2017 01:10 PM

Are we to use Scotland House rather than Dover House now when hot-desking in London? Will advice come out on booking desks there?

Be Bold for Change



13/03/2017

International Women's Day 2017 took place last week, with the theme 'Be Bold For Change'.

The Scottish Government's event at Augustine United Church in Edinburgh had great speakers sharing their own stories and challenging our thinking.

Olivia McLeod raised gender-stereotyping and the impact on our children, their development, health and aspirations. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] shared their experience as EU Nationals working for the Scottish Government, while Creative Scotland's Cate Nelson Shaw encouraged us to be bolder in putting ourselves forward for new opportunities.

Long-term job sharers from the Cabinet Office Sarah McLean and Tessa Griffiths were inspiring – and we have asked them to return for a longer session with Scottish Government staff on how job sharing works at its best.

I joined the civil service when my own son was still young, and it was rare to job share. I remember arranging a job share for one of my own team – [REDACTED], who is still job sharing now I believe! I'm keen to hear how teams feel job sharing works here now. If you job share, want to job share or work with colleagues who do – how does it work and what difference does it make? What issues does it raise?

We should recognise progress in making the Scottish Government a more gender balanced organisation. We are developing legislation on gender balances on public boards – and for the first time, more women than men have been appointed to the boards of public bodies. We now have more women at senior civil service level in core staffing – up from 40% in March 2015 to 45% in September 2016, higher than the UK Civil Service.

We now have our first job sharers at director and deputy director level, more female applicants for our Graduate Development Programme (GDP) and have achieved gender balance among the 85 modern apprentices recruited since April 2016.

We need to apply the lessons learnt of what works for gender to address other inequalities. We have more black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) applicants for our GDP. And two weeks ago I was delighted when the Scottish Government won Most Improved Scottish Employer at the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index Awards. I firmly believe our focus on women's equality has alerted us to barriers faced by LGBTI colleagues.

But there's much more to do. We stand on the shoulders of those who go before us and have a responsibility to those who will come after us.

Everyone at last week's Scottish Government session made a pledge to Be Bold For Change.

My own pledge is to have a young woman from a looked after background shadow me at some point during each of the next three years. What's yours?

Comments (1)



[REDACTED] 14/03/2017 01:05 PM
Great to read about the above event.

On the international side of SG's portfolio work, staff from the International Development Team also attended an International Women's Day event that evening in the Scottish Parliament with our Minister Dr Alasdair Allan. Tearfund Scotland had invited Parliamentarians and civil society to join a celebration with them of the inspiring stories of girls' empowerment and hope from the work of their partners in Malawi – with a photo exhibition having taken place in the Parliament that day #7girlsMalawi.

The girls' empowerment project featured, in the north of Malawi, is one that is supported by us over several years under our £9M pa International Development Fund. One of our team visited the project in Karonga in August 2015.

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/International/int-dev/Maps/Malawi>

This Tearfund article makes sobering reading, but the work being done is also inspirational, and we'd encourage colleagues to try and catch the photo exhibition as it tours Scotland, or even get in touch with Tearfund to offer a church or other venue to host an exhibition. You can also read the stories of the 7 Malawian girls featured in the photos, in their own moving words, by clicking on each of the boxes at the base of the article:

http://www.tearfund.org/en/about_you/around_the_uk/scotland_old/latest_news/7girlsmalawi/

Communication is key



20/03/2017

Last week exemplified the fast-moving, ever changing landscape in which we work.

Some of you will have heard me talking about 2017 as the Year of the Manager and the importance of us managing – challenging and cherishing – our teams especially during uncertain times. In particular, trust, engagement and communication become even more important, allowing us to raise issues freely, take part in informed discussions, and agree action required to prepare for what lies ahead.

The best place for these conversations is in your own team – considering how your work links to, or is affected by, the bigger picture, now and in the times ahead and how you respond, plan and prepare accordingly. So in my email to all staff last week I called on all managers to take the lead in sharing information, updating staff and creating space for these conversations on a regular basis. Each of us will have an opportunity for an open discussion within our local teams, divisions and/or at directorate level.

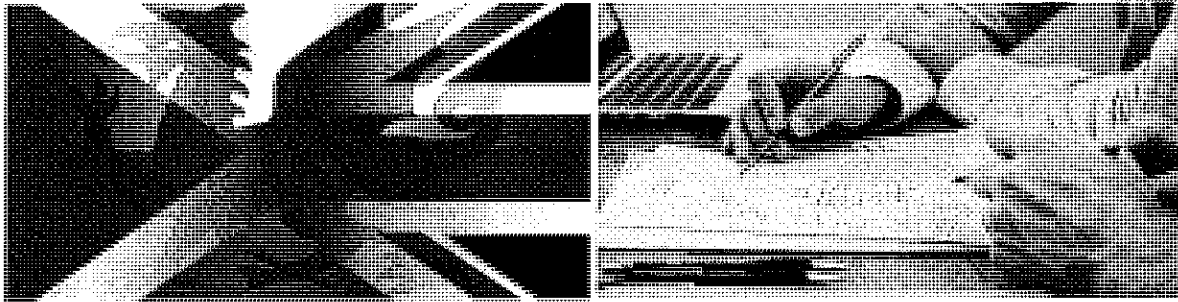
In addition to hearing from your own manager, you can attend corporate staff events and question and answer sessions. Executive Team colleagues and I regularly take part in Ask ET and Ask DG sessions, which are turning into open conversations on topical issues, priorities and challenges. The latest of these was Ask ET at Atlantic Quay last Thursday – you can watch the short video below.

During this time our SG2020 vision - being open, responsive and capable – and managing our resources to match Government priorities become even more important. Last week's Directors' Network discussed work already in train on how we resource Ministerial priorities and the implications of new and emerging priorities on these requirements. DGs are discussing this with Ministers and will consider the full resourcing requirements emerging from this process at the end of the month.

I continue to be impressed by the professionalism, craft, and hard work of colleagues in supporting Ministers, including in the run up to the First Minister's announcement last week and in preparing for this week's Parliamentary debate. As civil servants supporting the Scottish Government, it is crucial that we retain this level of professionalism and remember our obligations under the Civil Service Code – this continues to underpin all our relationships and remains the bedrock of everything we do.

Comments (0)

Relationships with purpose



27/03/2017

Westminster incident

I was in London on Wednesday when the Westminster terrorist attack took place and saw first-hand the impact on colleagues in Whitehall and across the city. Our thoughts are with all those directly affected and their friends and families.

I was, yet again, impressed with the practised and skilled way in which colleagues in London and Scotland handled the incident. Ministers have praised the professional advice and support from officials and I would like to add my thanks to everyone involved.

Relationships across governments

Building and maintaining good relationships with colleagues across Governments remains a vital part of my role. So most weeks I attend the 'Wednesday Morning Colleagues' meeting in London with my fellow Permanent Secretaries from UK departments, intelligence communities and devolved administrations.

This enables me to maintain contact through all political weather, catch colleagues face to face regarding issues which might impact on Scotland's interests but also to hear how the UK Government addresses aspects of its work – and how we might learn from this.

I have also now been asked to join the Civil Service Board – responsible for the overall strategic leadership and management of the UK civil service, and which meets monthly. Useful relationships, comparable challenges and valuable insights and information all make the very early start or overnight sleeper entirely worthwhile.

Give back as well as take

Derek Jones, former Permanent Secretary for Wales, was a great support in my early days as Permanent Secretary. I was very grateful for his time and encouragement, so we went out to lunch last week to mark his recent retirement. I hope to impart some of my own experience and learning to the new Welsh Permanent Secretary Shan Morgan, who will be shadowing me here in Edinburgh in a few weeks' time – all part of sharing our learning and fostering good relationships across the devolved administrations.

End of year reviews

Our end of year reviews are due for completion by the end of May. Giving and receiving constructive feedback is a crucial part of this conversation and adds an essential dimension to the process.

In order for feedback to be useful and truly 360 degrees, you need to seek the views of those you manage as well as those from your own manager and countersigning officer.

It might be quite a simple question – what would you like to see me do more – and do less? How can I make your job easier? What is the one thing I need to be aware of in how I come across to other people? I am asking a trusted individual to ask all of my DGs and others about my impact – what works and what doesn't.

I shall share the results and what I intend to do with it. This type of conversation is all about building a franker, more open, responsive and capable organisation as part of SG2020. What will you ask your team?

Scotland's Choice debate

The Parliamentary debate on Scotland's Choice which was suspended last week resumes tomorrow, and Article 50 is being triggered on Wednesday. The new 'Need to Know' section on Saltire is a helpful way for all of us to follow this and other important breaking news. We each have a responsibility to keep in touch with the bigger picture to help us deliver for the Scottish Government.

Comments (0)

Brexit and business



03/04/2017

Last week the Scottish Parliament voted in support of an independence referendum, the Prime Minister invoked Article 50, and the First Minister wrote to the Prime Minister seeking early discussions to enable the parliament to legislate for a referendum.

All of this represents a professional challenge for the civil service as a whole.

There are particular challenges for us in the Scottish Government as we implement newly devolved powers, deliver on the Programme for Government, prepare to articulate and represent Scotland's interests in UK/EU negotiations, and support Ministers in the constitutional debate as it unfolds. We are all working hard to ensure that the organisation is ready for this complex landscape - you will be involved in this process and hear more in the near future.

Sustainable economic growth remains the Scottish Government's overarching purpose. And during these uncertain times it is more important than ever that we engage with the business community.

As part of a senior leadership exchange run with the Whitehall Industry Group, I welcomed Mike Coupe, Chief Exec of Sainsbury's plc, to shadow me last Thursday. As leaders of large - but very different - organisations we share values and goals including how we lead and manage change, what the digital future holds, how public and private partnerships work at their best and how to build and maintain resilience as a leader. I am looking forward to the return visit when I meet him and his team later in the year.

Mike's insights and observations on governments and where they add value to the business community and food and drink sector were very interesting. He was interested in our outcome based approach and the positive impact this can have in 'seeing the whole picture' as it impacts on business. He quoted the Irish Government's approach following the economic crash, bringing in business to

help shape policy, and their early investment in industry, technology and market development. DG Economy Liz Ditchburn and Mary McAllan Director for Economic Development certainly grilled Mike on this experience and thinking!

I joined the First Minister at the Advanced Forming Research Centre at Strathclyde University last week, to see their work supporting advanced manufacturing and then heard from leading companies on why this initiative works for them. Bringing public, private and innovation together was considered essential.

I also co-chaired a roundtable with Alex Chisholm (Perm Sec of BEIS) in Glasgow on Friday. We brought together business leaders and innovators to hear views on the UK Government's draft Industrial Strategy and how this fits with devolved responsibilities and policies. A good meeting – and great example of the UK and Scottish governments working together closely to serve the interests of Scotland.

Comments (0)

Priorities and new powers



10/04/2017

Four new public bodies were launched on 1 April – the Scottish Land Commission, the Scottish Fiscal Commission, the Crown Estate Scotland and Community Justice Scotland. And a range of new powers on employability and social security came into effect under the Scotland Act 2016 last week.

The Scottish Government continues to build tax-raising capability, with additional powers over Scottish Income Tax also coming into force last week. This represents the biggest shift in powers and responsibilities since devolution – thank you to all of those involved for your hard work in getting ready for this step change.

Changes and similarities

On Tuesday evening I was delighted to launch the National Records of Scotland's new exhibition – 'Scribes and Royal Authority: Scotland's Charters 1100-1250' which contains examples of medieval charters from Holyrood Abbey and Melrose Abbey.

These charters record grants and donations of property and privileges - documenting the business activity of our medieval ancestors. As such they provide a unique insight into the development of governance and record keeping. But they are also some of the earliest surviving documents produced in Scotland - very few survive from before 1250. The exhibition provides an interesting contrast between modern Government in Scotland and some of its origins.

It remains vitally important – and a fundamental role of the civil servant - to record decisions, and to show and prove their authenticity. These rare documents are a vital resource to historians, but the scribes who produced them are often overlooked – again, rather familiar to us civil servants!

End Year Reviews

I also spent time last week undertaking End Year Reviews (EYR) with Executive Team colleagues. It's important to prioritise these conversations with our managers and those we manage and that we prepare for these sessions. We need to make and take time to reflect on what we achieved over the last year, but also to look at how we achieved it, as individuals, team members and managers.

Please don't forget to provide constructive feedback to your own manager on what helped you this year – they should ask you as part of your monthly conversation or EYR. But you can initiate that conversation with a simple suggestion – one thing you would like them to do more often, and one thing you would like them to do less.

Finally...

It has been a fast-paced start to the year. And we have a lot of work ahead as we continue to implement new powers, deliver on priorities, set our budget, and represent Scotland's interests for the future. Thank you for your hard work and dedication throughout the last few months. I hope you are able to enjoy a well-earned break over the Easter weekend.

Comments (2)



██████████ 12/04/2017 01:52 PM
Like the two paras re EYR - a nice, easy prompt! :)



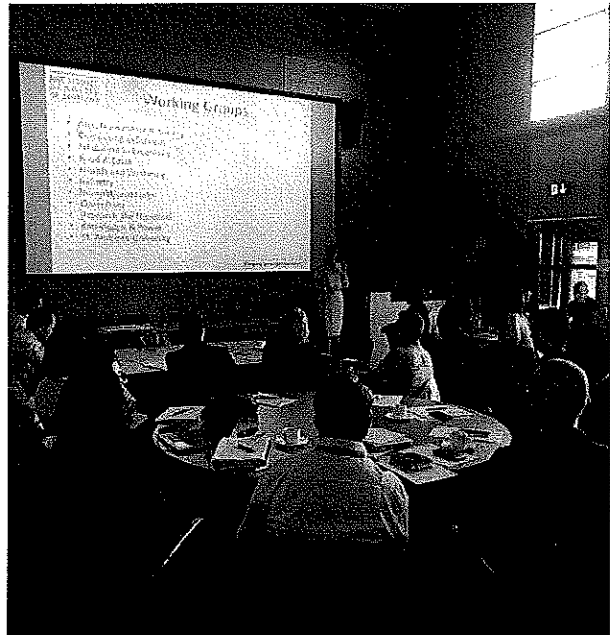
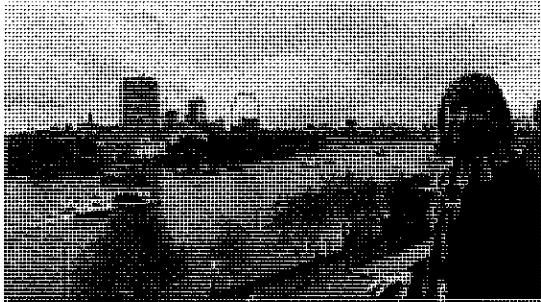
██████████ 11/04/2017 03:52 PM
Of course, the reason we have so few pre-1250 documents is that wicked Edward of England stole them all. But let's not mention that, eh?

Fit for the future



Leslie Evans
@PermSecScot

View from @scotgov first permanent base in London #scotlandhouse #teamscotland @ScotDevInt @scotent @VisitScotland



24/04/2017

General election

We saw another example of the importance of readiness in the Scottish Government, as staff worked quickly to update election guidance following last week's announcement of a UK general election on 8 June 2017.

A UK general election raises different issues to a Scottish Parliament election. The Scottish Government will remain in office whatever the outcome, and normal Scottish Government business continues. It's vital that as civil servants we continue to give ministers the support they need, so please familiarise yourself with this guidance if you haven't already done so.

London Hub

The First Minister officially opened Scotland House last week – the Scottish Government's first permanent base in London.

I visited Scotland House last month and it is a lovely, light modern and spacious facility, with access to a small outdoor space and fabulous views over the river. It also showcases Scottish products and provides touchdown and meeting space for Scottish entrepreneurs and businesses.

In addition to writing, I am arranging a thank you to Dover House front of house and support staff for their help, tolerance and kindness over the years. Many of us have fond memories of Dover House – what are yours?

Strategic Review of Economic Capability

We now have greater autonomy and increased responsibility for generating and collecting the revenue that will fund Scottish Government policy and public services in Scotland, as part of Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Last Thursday, David Ritchie from the Energy and Climate Change Directorate presented directors with an overview of his work on a Strategic Review of Economic Policy Capability and Capacity across the organisation. This review is assessing the structure, skills and knowledge we require to respond to this latest economic challenge – and that means you!

Whether you work in economic or social policy, in the professions or in operational or delivery functions – everyone needs a certain level of 'economic literacy' to ensure their work aligns with these new powers and responsibilities, and supports Scotland's sustainable, inclusive economic growth.

David has been speaking with senior leaders across the organisation and will provide initial recommendations to the Executive Board by the end of May. Deputy directors will be engaged in this important work but you can also contact [David](#) directly.

Leaders of tomorrow

The Royal Society of Edinburgh's Young Academy of Scotland (YAS) provides a platform for young entrepreneurs, professionals and academics to develop an influential voice and address challenging issues facing society. I was delighted to welcome YAS to Victoria Quay for their Spring event.

Academy members were spending their day considering 'outcomes'. I challenged them to look beyond the purely technical dimension of outcome working and to reflect on the wider challenges this model of government presents, including questions it prompts on the relationship between individual and the state and what constitutes a progressive and open society. And I urged them to remember the Scottish Government outcome focus is a means to an end – making life better for the people of Scotland.

Comments (8)



28/04/2017 12:40 PM

As [redacted] will know from our time at the Scotland Office, I also loved working at Dover House. Steeped in history and character and only a couple of doors up from Downing St. You could see into the garden of no. 10 and the permanent SO staff would tell me they could see Tony Blair's kids playing on the trampoline sometimes (shows how long ago that was!). I still enjoy boring my kids on trips to London, if we're passing, by saying I used to work from time to time amidst such grandeur. It's the end of an era and the start of a new one - Scotland House looks fantastic and, let's face it, more fit for purpose.



28/04/2017 11:38 AM

Spent a very enjoyable 18 months working in Dover House, with the most enjoyable memories involving the consumption of a wee bit of alcohol in the secretary of states room until around 3 in the morning, surrounded by priceless antiques. Not a situation I ever expected to find myself in. The door staff were great, [redacted] at that time were great lads and always had a friendly word for all who entered.



27/04/2017 12:55 PM

Really sad that I missed the consultation exercise that asked regular Dover House visitors whether leaving would be desirable. Much of my past Bill Team / Private Office life was spent in that building (and I even slept in one of the top-floor beds one night - an experience not to be repeated). And though it's a bit depleted and rough round the edges these days, it has still served as a very convenient base for those of us trying to maintain a decent dialogue with Whitehall colleagues.



MacDonald E (Elspeth) (FSS) 26/04/2017 12:02 PM

I attended several meetings in Dover House whilst on secondment in London a couple of years ago - loved that view out over Horse Guards, and also the sense of history with all the portraits of Secretaries of State. And now looking forward to visiting Scotland House - looks like the view is equally special.



26/04/2017 08:40 AM

Most of my short time in Dover House was spent running around not being a very good Private Secretary, but there were some very happy times. The back balcony looking over Horse Guards is a special place to sit in the evening, even if the security guards weren't best pleased when we did. I would probably remember more if I hadn't accepted quite so many of [redacted] famously "robust" gin and tonics on Friday afternoons.



[Redacted]

24/04/2017 02:52 PM

I remember being told when we were Scottish Office that if you were in London and had your pass with you, you could ask the security staff on the door to give you a quick tour. Sadly I never did, and only visited when ODPM had moved in, when SG staff were tucked away in the basement or back rooms and required to use the servants' stairs!



[Redacted]

24/04/2017 01:21 PM

Dover House? I love the place, so full of character and the staff were so welcoming. As Scotland Office staff at that time we always got the best accommodation, including a number of meetings in the Head of Department room tucked between the Secretary of State and Under Secretary's rooms, with views over Horse Guards parade and Downing Street, wow! And on a flippant note, Lady Penelope's House in Thunderbirds was modelled on the front door with its pillars

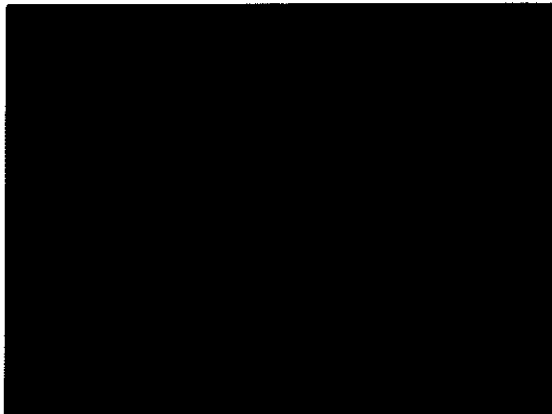


[Redacted]

24/04/2017 12:47 PM

The top floor / attic rooms which the Bill Teams used, had dodgy looking ex-army beds with bed covers and linen which had seen better days. The bed covers looked like they had been made out of hessian and the pillow covers were turning a shade of grey. Never slept in the beds even when finishing work at 3.30 in the morning while working on The Children (Scotland) Bill back in 1995. The hotel bed was still the better option even though we had to get up early to get back into Dover House for 9.00 am that morning.

Reflections and learning



15/05/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week.

I had my End Year Review (EYR) with Sir Jeremy Heywood last week. It was a valuable opportunity to reflect on progress and milestones from the past year. As well as discussing three sources of feedback on my performance, fulfilment of my objectives and priorities and challenges ahead, we also spoke about how I am addressing greater diversity in the Scottish Government and SG2020, including capability and skills, and learning and development opportunities.

Shan Morgan, Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Government, recently spent time shadowing me, finding out more about the day-to-day workings within the Scottish Government. You can [read Shan's reflections](#) in her recent Saltire guest blog. I would recommend shadowing if you have the opportunity – not just across teams, divisions or directorates within the Scottish Government, but with wider agencies and government departments, and external organisations, colleagues and contacts. We can learn most from those furthest away from our own experience. I am looking forward to my own shadowing opportunity later in the year when I will shadow the CEO of Sainsbury's.

Last year, I shared my 360 feedback, my reflections and intended actions arising from my EYR with colleagues and I intend to do the same this year. Everyone's EYR and reflections are personal to them, but I'd encourage individuals or teams to share feedback with one another. You can help each other identify one or two areas to change how you work in response to that feedback and then help each other keep to that commitment, providing friendly feedback on any differences noticed as a result.

I was also fortunate to have the opportunity to meet [REDACTED] last week. They are [REDACTED] and arrived in Scotland in June 2016 as part of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme. [REDACTED] received [REDACTED] from the [REDACTED] in 2014, before working as a full time [REDACTED]. She is currently volunteering as the [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is a [REDACTED] and is looking to use his talents in Scotland. They were both shadowing communications colleagues in the Scottish Government. It was humbling to hear their response to my question about the biggest benefit of being in Scotland: feeling safe.

The week ended with reports of the global cyber-attack that disrupted a number of NHS services. As far as we can tell SCOTS hasn't been affected, but vigilance remains key to eradicating any residual threat. Incidents like this bring home the importance of all of us being extra diligent when opening

emails or web-browsing – if in doubt, delete or report. I would also like to thank ITECS colleagues who worked hard over the weekend to safeguard our systems.

Comments (1)



15/05/2017 02:12 PM

Great to hear about the positive benefits you've had shadowing Lesley - and also to see your encouragement for colleagues to look out with their immediate vicinity professionally to develop.

Reaching out



22/05/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

After Cabinet this week, we heard from young people from [REACH for Autism](#) on being diagnosed and living with autism – it was a really powerful session which impacted on all of us present, and brought home how almost every Scottish Government policy area has a role to play in improving support for people living with autism. You can hear more from of the First Minister, one of the young people, and me in the video below.

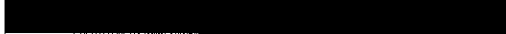
On Thursday, I spoke at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) headquarters in Paris, at an event co-hosted by Carnegie UK Trust on innovative approaches to improving wellbeing. I shared the story of the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#) – focusing all our work on better outcomes for the people of Scotland and the 'Scottish approach' supporting this, including improvement methodology, co-production and prevention.

It was interesting to hear other countries' experience of outcome working (Northern Ireland and Wales but also Ireland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Estonia) including the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which will be incorporated into Scottish Government NPF later in the year.

Many of you will recall that the introduction of the NPF in 2007 represented a real shift in how we all worked - a full restructure of our organisation, a big change in partnership working (not least with local authorities), with a three year education programme and online assessment of progress.

We had to constantly challenge ourselves to question if our time and resources were really being focussed on improving longer term outcomes. Ten years on, those radical new approaches are part of how we work, day and daily. But many of you will not be here when the NPF was introduced. You might like to consider how well your team understands the NPF and your contribution to, and alignment with, each outcome, not least as we undertake prioritisation of Scottish Government work and matching resources to priorities.


Continuing the learning from others theme from last week, Jennie Grainger, outgoing Director General from HM Revenue and Customs, was visiting us to share her learning and experience, including improving diversity in the workforce, sharing data and boosting morale in difficult times.

. I first met her on a civil service development course and knew immediately that I could learn from her outlook and experience. I have picked her brains regularly over the years and vice versa – she is impressed with our work here.

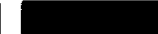
Like many of you I suspect, I have found I learn more from exchanges with other people like this than in any formal training session – but I've learnt that you need to be open to it. Our civil servant colleagues across the UK may be working on different policies, in different contexts but they are a great source of creativity and experience. And funny stories too!

Comments (2)



 24/05/2017 05:13 PM
Good to see this Autism Initiative being supported by the Scottish Government.

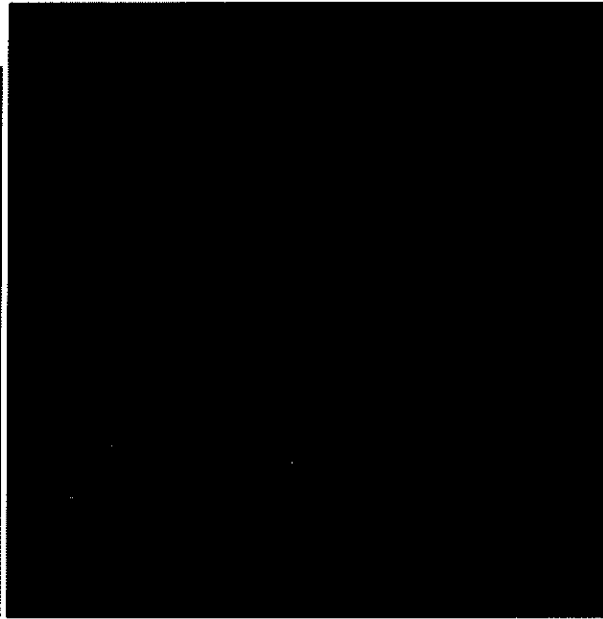


 22/05/2017 01:30 PM
Fantastic to see a good gender mix in the R.E.A.C.H. for Autism video. Girls and Women are often overlooked, misunderstood, or missed completely. Not sure if web-links are permitted in comments - you might need to copy and paste....

Where will you make a change for Autistic people?

http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/actions.aspx?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=TMICampaign2017&utm_content=Link_Post_A2

Learning from others



05/06/2017

NICS Live

Northern Ireland's Civil Service is separate from UK Government Civil Service, and I was invited to share our experience of leading through uncertainty and with an outcomes approach, at their annual NICS Live event, held in Belfast 10 days ago. In fact we have much to learn from our Northern Ireland colleagues who are leading through considerable uncertainty – something I discussed with Sir Malcolm McKibbin, head of the Northern Irish Civil Service, when we caught a few minutes together.

Civil Service Live in Edinburgh takes place on 4 July and represents a great opportunity to celebrate and learn from UK civil service best practice. The workshops at these events have proved particularly popular with Scottish Government colleagues – very high quality and interactive – and I would encourage you to attend. However, I was impressed by the scale and nature of the Northern Ireland programme, and it prompted me to think about a Scottish Government Civil Service Live event, shaped and tailored just for those of us who work for the Scottish Government. What do you think – would there be an interest?

Learning from the younger generation

I attended Standard Life's Get Hired employability event last week. With its roots in Sir Ian Wood's Developing Scotland's Young Workforce report, it brings together young people (many with troubled backgrounds and/or finding it tough to get into the employment market) with businesses seeking new talent. I heard about exercises to build confidence and improve interview techniques, and from young people who were benefitting from the programme.

I very much enjoy hearing – and learning – from young people, their energy, creativity and different outlooks. That is why I often invite younger employees or students to shadow me for the day. They gain an insight into a senior management role, but I benefit from their ideas and energy, like last week when final year student [REDACTED] shadowed me for the day.

Security

The attack on Manchester brought more uncertainty and once again tested Government resilience. Thank you to all involved in the Scottish Government response during those early hours and in the days following the attack. As you'll be aware there was no change to our internal response level, but we all need to remain vigilant and security aware at all times. You should make sure you are familiar with the Scottish Government's security policies and procedures.

Comments (7)

[REDACTED] 07/06/2017 11:57 AM
It would be great if we could think about learning events for SG that use some of the approaches used in the national improvement collaboratives like the Scottish Patient Safety Programme and/or Children and Young People's Collaborative - where people come together to share learning focused around a shared collective Improvement aim and set of interventions, take away specific actions to make improvements towards that overall aim, bringing this back to a future learning session to share learning about what works/doesn't work, how they have tested small steps of change in their own context/teams. Thoughts ?

[REDACTED] 06/06/2017 09:27 AM
Hi loving reading this post about sharing ideas. One of the highlights of my year is the Five Nations policy sharing event which is when we all get together to share ideas. Such a rich exchange! An SG Civil Service Live sounds interesting.

[REDACTED] 05/06/2017 02:23 PM
The UK Civil Service Live event is a great way to "learn from others" and whilst an SG event is an idea its important to understand how SG fits within the wider Civil Service

[REDACTED] 06/2017 01:21 PM
I agree with [REDACTED] about and SG CS Live...and I've been here a long time!



05/06/2017 12:15 PM

Love the idea of an SG CS Live. As a relative newbie to the CS and SG, leading a team of even newer newbies, I struggle sometimes to understand the 'part of but with some differences' thing re UK Civil Service. An event like that could help - as well as help ground us all in a shared sense of SG as an org with its own identity and culture(s).



05/06/2017 10:58 AM

Thanks for spotting the typo, apologies! This has now been updated.



05/06/2017 10:18 AM

CIVIL SERVICE LIVE 2017! is on Tuesday 4th July, not 8th

Pulling together during change



12/06/2017

General Election 2017

The general election result is now known and Westminster will convene tomorrow (Tuesday, 13 June). The UK's withdrawal from the European Union, and its impact, will no doubt take centre stage over the coming weeks and months, with Brexit talks likely to get underway from next week, and legislation due to be introduced at Westminster.

As civil servants we need to be ready and prepared for challenges ahead, including the preparation for complex negotiations and the impact on Scottish Government interests. Don't forget to look out for regular updates via Saltire and the [Need to Know](#) app.

Working together to improve

I was in Glasgow last Monday for the first of a second phase of sessions with all deputy directors. Another takes place today (Monday, 12 June) at VQ, then Thursday, 15 June at Saughton House and Thursday, 29 June at St Andrew's House.

There is also a VCR session for those deputy directors based outside the central belt. We reflected on leading and, especially, managing in a rapidly changing environment, focussing on the importance of high quality performance management through quality monthly conversations, shared team feedback and open leadership and networking.

We also discussed outcomes, acknowledging this is the 10th year of the National Performance Framework, and agreed that growing an inclusive, sustainable economy remains the top priority for everyone in Scottish Government and agencies, whether we occupy fiscal, economic, social policy or operational/delivery roles. Are you clear about how your work contributes to growing the economy?

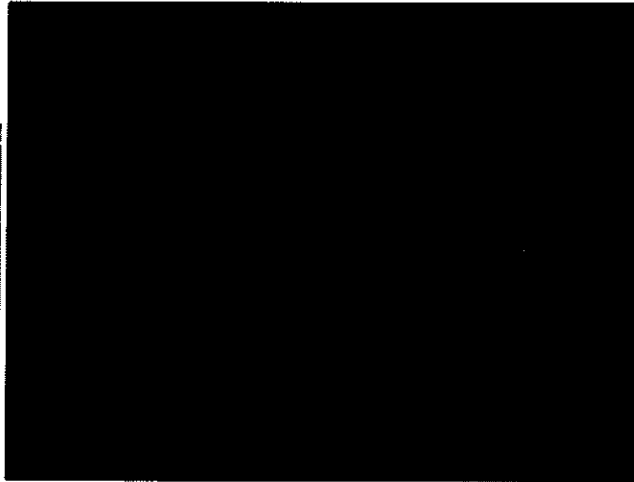
Stimulating the life sciences sector

On Thursday I met with Ken Sutherland and John Brown (many of you will remember him for his time here) both from the [Scottish Lifesciences Association](#).

We discussed the role of NHS Scotland in stimulating the life sciences sector, not least through smart procurement and how innovation and new technology drives systemic improvements in health.

Comments (0)

Reflections and memories



26/06/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

EU Referendum – one year on

Last Friday marked the one year anniversary since the EU referendum, as Director for External Affairs, Karen Watt, mentioned in her [blog](#).

Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Mike Russell has outlined two key issues as we enter a period of more intense negotiations – the UK Government process in which the Scottish Government engages in order to shape and influence negotiations, and the consequences of these negotiations for every part of Scotland. All our work, in every part of the Scottish Government, is set in this context – you will want to keep informed and up-to-date as negotiations progress.

Economic growth

I joined the First Minister on her visit to the Michelin factory in Dundee where a £16.5 million investment will support additional premises and new manufacturing equipment. I heard [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Dundee, at the Economic Forum a few years ago where he was describing how he would turn the organisation around by embracing fair work values.

It was good to see these coming to fruition not only with high employee engagement – their staff survey completion rate is around 95% – but also as a successful business attracting investment in a new plant and technology.

We heard from other Dundee businesses (many from the games sector) who raised issues such as the implications of Brexit, attracting people with specialist coding technical skills **and** management experience, and promoting Scotland internationally. It was also useful to meet with [REDACTED] from our Washington office last week to consider how our international policy might help address some of this too.

Pride

I very much enjoyed the camaraderie of walking under the Scottish Government's banner, and chatting to colleagues, their partners and families at Pride Edinburgh recently. I want us all to feel comfortable and valued in our workplace – and in Scotland.

Remembering Helen Cameron

Helen Cameron, Director for Children and Families passed away last week. She was a **top** woman - fiercely bright, passionate about her work, thoughtful, collaborative, determined and also sassy, feisty, and very funny. I shall miss her very much and the organisation is the poorer without her. We shall be considering how we remember Helen in due course – but perhaps the best way is to share our memories and stories, and reflect on how very lucky we were to have known her.

Comments (3)



[REDACTED] 29/06/2017 12:00 PM

Echo everything colleagues both here and on Paul Johnston's thread have said about Helen. Her focus and attention to detail was incredible, she was challenging and supportive in just the right balance and a huge inspiration.



[REDACTED] 26/06/2017 10:15 AM

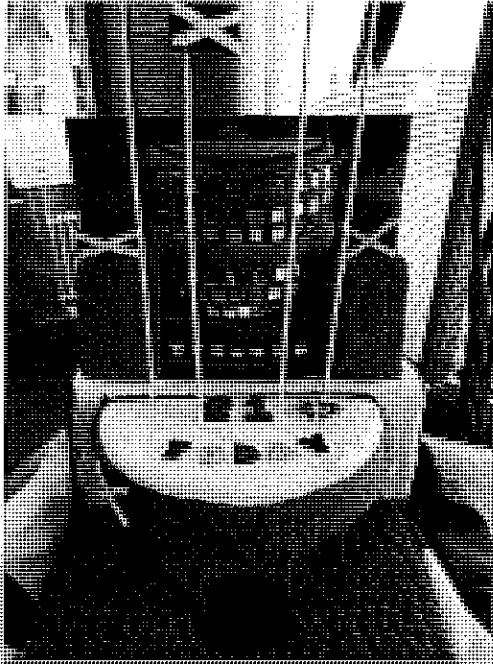
Echoing [REDACTED] - a lovely woman and both she and Olivia set a fantastic model of SCS job-share possibilities. Very glad to have had a chance to meet and work with both, both amazing role models.



[REDACTED] 6/06/2017 09:51 AM

Incredibly sad news to hear about Helen. She was a very thoughtful, generous and just really nice person to work alongside.

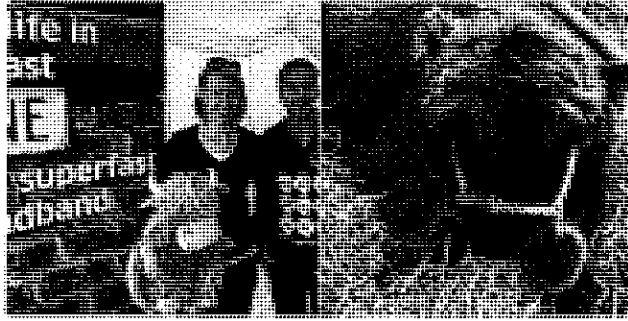
Managing change and challenge



Leslie Evans 
@PermSecScot

Follow

Busy @digitalscots stand
@ScotlandRHShow today with popular
mascot. But nearby ... #highlandshow



5:09 AM · 25 Jun 2017



03/07/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Happy Birthday Victoria Quay!

It was VQ's 21st birthday on Saturday, coinciding with my own anniversary, having been Permanent Secretary for two years on 1 July. And this week illustrates many aspects of my role and the key challenges our organisation faces.

The UK Government outlined proposals on rights for EU nationals in the UK, and the details of a confidence and supply deal with the DUP. And here in Scotland, the First Minister announced a reset on the timetable for a second referendum on independence for Scotland, to be reviewed when the terms of the UK's exit from the EU are clearer.

More immediately, she committed the Scottish Government to 'putting its shoulder to the wheel' to get the best possible outcome for Scotland from the EU exit process, as well as continuing to develop and make the case for independence as a choice to be put to the people of Scotland in due course.

I attended the Civil Service Board, which oversees and leads the entire UK Civil Service, where we discussed readiness and capability to deliver the support needed for EU negotiations, and important supporting structure – digital and commercial capacity.

Finance Secretary Derek Mackay provided the Directors' Network with frank feedback and encouragement as we prepare for the Programme for Government and Spending Review and the need to be (in the First Minister's words) 'creative, imaginative, bold, and radical' in the ideas we put forward to ministers. Cabinet secretaries will use this material to inform conversations about policy and funding priorities with their directors over the summer – your deputy director will update you.

I met a range of colleagues as part of a very enjoyable day at the Royal Highland Show last weekend, and bought much Scottish honey! But my main memory was witnessing the pride, passion and commitment from Scottish Government and agency staff working there.

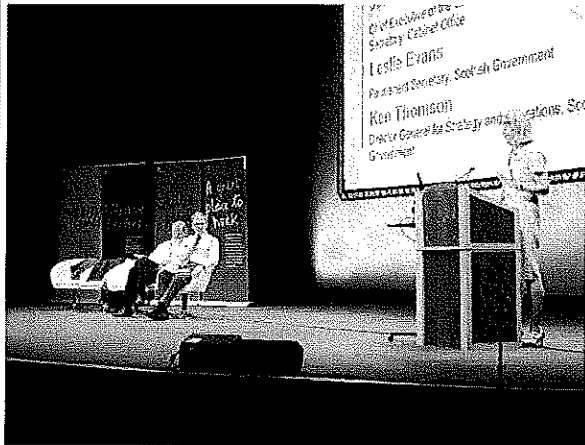
I made time to visit and to meet and hear from teams, reflecting on the importance I attach to communication. Which is part of developing an open, more frank culture which I believe is essential for our success and a crucial part of the organisation we want to be. As part of this I am keen to hear your thoughts on this blog, and how it might be improved – please do share your thoughts in this [survey](#).

You may have seen on Saltire that the [Executive Team has been restructured](#). I shall continue discussions with senior leaders about wider changes we need to make regarding how we work in the Scottish Government. Of course real change is not just about structures. Lasting change happens locally, at your hand and in your teams, and is just as much about changing our behaviours and being aware of our impact on others as it is about tweaking process or systems.

Finally, people often ask me – do you actually enjoy your job? The short answer is yes. It is testing, stimulating, very absorbing and – often – great fun. But like all our work, it can be tough and all consuming. Over the past two years I have learnt to spot when tiredness or stress makes me less effective or less sensitive to those around me, and what/who helps me maintain my energy levels. I am looking forward to my holiday – I hope you will look after yourself and each other by taking a break over the summer, and encouraging those around you to do the same.

Comments (0)

Learning and engaging



10/07/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Recess offers a chance for us to catch up a little and attend learning and sharing events like [Civil Service Live](#) which came to Edinburgh last Tuesday, the third year the roadshow has visited Scotland.

Hundreds of civil servants from the Scottish and UK Governments and agencies came along to the Edinburgh International Conference Centre to listen, watch, ask questions and speak up.

I presented at a session on what makes effective leaders, chaired one on digital services and hosted a participative workshop about diversity and inclusion. I also visited the stalls in the market place and took part in some spot mentoring.

I enjoyed hearing from Derek Mackay, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution. He spoke about how he values working with a civil service where people feel empowered to contribute and make change at every level. He also talked about the impact of our work and the difference we make to communities in Scotland – an aspect of my work which I value deeply and I know others do too. And there was much interest in the digital session about the new Scottish Government agency which will be set up to support new benefit powers. Several people spoke to me about their operational and management skills and experience and expressed an interest in coming to work for the Scottish Government.

I also attended the Standing Council on Europe last week. The Council remains of vital importance in providing independent advice and thinking, not least during this critical time as we enter EU negotiations. This session focused on migration and Scotland's economic, fiscal, social and business interests in the free movement of people.

Last week I met with two Deputy Directors, Russell Bain and Claire Tynne-Irvine, to hear about their new roles within the Directorate for External Affairs and the experience they bring. And I also caught up with other Deputy Directors via Skype for Business in a virtual session, as part of a series where Sarah Davidson has been examining the context in which we are working now and in the future, and developing our management and leadership capability.

So a busy week but still time to fit in a small celebration to mark the start of recess with colleagues from my support team, DG business teams and the ET Hub, and to meet up with several ET colleagues for supper at Dishoom. Great food.

Finally please would you give [feedback on this blog](#) - does it hit the mark? What else would you like to hear/see in it? Could it work better as an occasional video blog? Or include interviews with others including colleagues and staff?

Comments (3)



13/07/2017 01:43 PM

Hopefully the evaluation will find these events are great value, (as anyone i know who has ever attended thought so) and consideration could be given to how we could reach more colleagues in outlying areas/who cannot attend in person due to disability/meetings/lack of line manager approval to attend in person etc by live streaming or downloading from the intranet.



Evans L (Leslie) 11/07/2017 04:20 PM

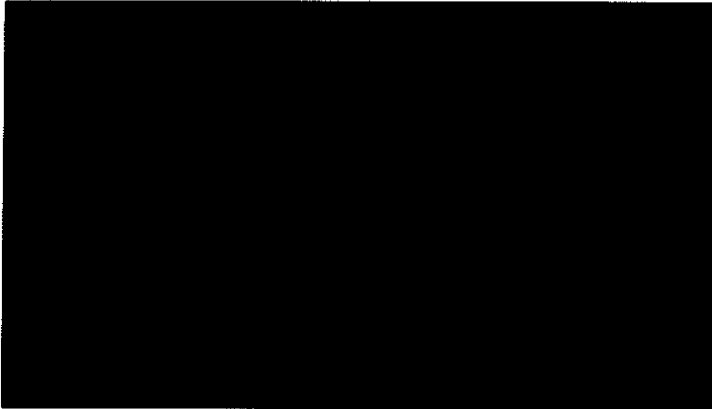
no reason to think that it won't return to Scotland for a fourth year, but there is an extensive evaluation process underway for all CS Live events. SG contributes to the costs of the event in Scotland and we need to ensure good value for money - so the more of us attending the better. I hope others note your clear endorsement and join you there next year!



11/07/2017 03:21 PM

Do we know yet if Civil service Live will return to Scotland next year? It was an extremely interesting and enjoyable event. One of the people I was speaking to when Spot Mentoring had travelled all the way from York to be there. It would be great to keep one of the events up here!

Engaging and collaborating



17/07/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

EU (Withdrawal) Bill

Last Thursday the UK Government introduced the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill to the House of Commons. This is a complex piece of legislation which, as well as disapplying EU law from the UK, would have significant effects on the powers of the devolved legislatures. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, issued a joint statement in response the introduction of the Bill.

Visiting staff across Scotland

I visited Oban just after taking up post and promised staff on the Island of Tiree that I would follow up our video conference with a visit in person. So – better later than never - I was on Tiree on Monday to hear about their work on the Croft House Grant Scheme.

I met members of Tiree Community Development Trust, Tiree Community Business Ltd and Tiree Community Council, as well as people running local businesses including fishermen, Tiree Music

[Festival](#), [Tiree Glass](#), [Blue Beyond](#) and [Discover Tiree](#). It gave me much food for thought about supporting the local economy and also community empowerment, the impact of the Islands Bill and the importance of really understanding the nature of island communities. I spoke with the Chief Executive of Argyll and Bute council on these issues and we have agreed follow up action which Kenneth Hogg, Director for Local Government and Communities, and his team are addressing.

I enjoy learning more about the work of colleagues based around Scotland. They are often the sole representatives of the organisation in their community – not always an easy role. Graham Black, Director of Marine Scotland, discussed this issue at Directors' Network as he shared reflections on his first few months in post. He spoke about the importance of valuing and communicating with teams across the country, and recognising the ambassadorial roles many play within communities. I'm looking forward to meeting more staff in the Western Isles next month.

What do you think colleagues need to know about your work? I would be interested to know.

Edinburgh festivals

Summer festivals are only a few weeks away. Like many of you, I am looking forward to attending events and catching up with friends who are visiting. I've been reflecting on my time participating in the Fringe – one year performing in Purcell's Dido and Aeneas on original instruments, and the following year managing a Fringe venue. This isn't the place to recall some of those experiences, but I remember we spent all day staple-gunning smart blue linen material (very stylish in those days) to cover the walls of front-of-house facilities, and all night fire proofing it in time for the health and safety inspection the next day. At 7am I awoke to the sound of hundreds of staples pinging out as the material shrank and fell to the floor – all good learning of course.

Some of you will be involved in performances in the festivals - please share details in the comments below.

There's still time to share your views on Perm Sec's blog in [this quick survey](#).

Comments (3)



18/07/2017 02:50 PM

August. The programme includes Brahms' German Requiem, with a four-hands piano accompaniment; Rheinberger's Mass in E flat (double choir, unaccompanied, aargh!); and the Monteverdi motets "Christe, Adoramus Te" and "Cantate Domino". Our concerts have been Fringe sell-outs for the last four years, so get your tickets now! £15, £13 (concessions) or £4 (children), available from the usual sources, or me!

Also, as part of the International Festival, Puccini's La Bohème is at the Festival Theatre on 25th, 26th and 27th August. I only mention this because my 12 year old son is part of the childrens' chorus at the beginning of the second act. Proud Dad!

17/07/2017 03:28 PM

In the mid 1990s I was still singing with the RSNO Chorus and we did a late night Edinburgh Festival performance in St Giles' Cathedral, conducted by the effervescent Christopher Bell. This concert featured two choral pieces by the Scottish composer, James MacMillan: his (very new) Cantos Sagrados and the world premiere of Divo Aloysio Sacrum, dedicated to St Aloysius Church in Glasgow. My main memory is of mild terror given the importance and difficulty of the pieces. We were also singing with a scaled-down choir and so the pressure was on! The church was packed but - if memory serves - it went well and we retreated, relieved, into the night after the performance.



17/07/2017 03:19 PM

Having never scored a theatre production before, I was out of my comfort zone as a musician; having only scored short films previously. I only had a script and couldn't make the dress rehearsals. Thankfully the script was well adapted and the writer, a friend, was on hand for comments. Of the 7 pieces I wrote they used 4 to great effect. I was too nervous to attend the premier but made the other 4 performances; eventually securing a 5 star review in the Scotsman. Hearing your music put to a play was an amazing experience and one I would do again.

Island hopping



14/08/2017

Outer Hebrides visit

Many of you will be returning from or will have recently had annual leave - I hope you have taken the opportunity to recharge and spend time with friends and family.

Following my leave in Spain (lovely but very hot) and Skye (lovely but very busy) I took the ferry from Uig to Lochmaddy to visit Benbecula, North Uist, Harris, St Kilda and Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. I met with Scottish Government colleagues in their offices in Benbecula and Stornoway. Teams working on Agriculture and Rural Economy, European Structural Funds and Marine Scotland all had issues to raise including; recruitment, how we handle and manage change including our systems, information sharing and communication, and wider topics, such as the impact of Brexit.

I also had the chance to meet and visit local businesses and organisations. [REDACTED], tenant of the Scottish Government [REDACTED] Estate, showed me around his substantial croft and shared his experience of diversifying including holiday lets and a camp site. Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar shared his thinking on serving island communities, the EU, growing the local economy and maintaining an effective relationship with the Scottish Government.

I visited the splendid Museum nan Eilean, saw some of the Lewis Chess pieces which were the catalyst for the new building, and visited the refurbished Lews Castle. I heard about plans to redevelop Stornoway Port from the Authority's Chief Executive Alex Macleod. And I went to St Kilda – something I have wanted to do ever since I first came to live in Scotland 32 years ago. It was a tremendous experience - one I shall treasure and always remember. Those of you who have visited will know that the boat journey is not for the faint hearted. Even Marine Scotland colleagues admitted that a force 5 feels quite substantial on a small boat, and I was ridiculously pleased to be one of only three people who did not succumb.

Get #upfront at Leading Together

I've mentioned my involvement in the [we are up front](#) initiative in previous blogs. This is a simple initiative set up by my reverse mentor Lauren Currie. It's all about building confidence in public speaking. Speakers invite a small group of people to join them on stage, to get used to the experience of being in front of a large crowd but without the pressure of having to speak.

On Wednesday 6 and Monday 11 September, I'll be speaking at our regular Leading Together events for senior civil servants in central Edinburgh. If you've got a speaking engagement coming up and you'd like to help prepare for the experience by joining me upfront at one of these events, please let your line manager know and send a short email (no more than 100 words) to [Corporate Communications](#) by Monday 28 August, explaining why you think this would help. Don't worry if you can't make it this time – we shall maintain a waiting list and contact you for Upfront opportunities in the future.

Comments (7)



16/08/2017 01:13 PM

If anyone is heading to Isle of Bute, give me a shout! As a Bute expat, I now have an "off the shelf" itinerary that I issue to people heading over who've asked me what are the top things to see/do (and eat / drink!), over anything from a day visit to a week long visit! Includes the fabulous Mount Stuart House (seat of Lord Bute), Rothesay Castle and the Standing Stones, otters at Scalpsie Bay, plus the favourites of all returning locals - Zavaroni's icecream and the Ettrick Bay tearoom with its stunning views across to Arran!

15/08/2017 05:49 PM

I lived in Na Eileanan an Iar for 12 years. Malcolm is a former colleague. I never saw a corncrake in the Western Isles but heard them often. Visits to Islay and Orkney gave me views of corncrakes. I love Harris and West Lewis and Barra. Saint Kilda is still on the bucket list despite my great uncle being the last missionary/dominic there. Some twenty years ago a study commissioned by the Comhairle and Western Isles Enterprise found that it's not the cost of the ferries which makes the islands more expensive - but rather the fact that the flow of goods and services from the islands to the Mainland is much smaller than the other way about making the ferry costs expensive. I still wonder about this finding. In my experience, adding value to food seems to be a successful way to redress that balance. I wish Malcolm and the Comhairle every success in seeking to regenerate Na Eileanan an Iar. :-)

15/08/2017 03:43 PM

I went cycling "doon the water" this weekend. 45 miles strenuous hilly cycling. Sun was splitting the sky. Train from Edinburgh to Gourock. Ferry from Gourock to Dunoon, on the Cowal Peninsula, Argyll and Bute. Cycled over the mountains to Tighnabruich (which you may know is Gaelic for house-on-the-hill (Tie-na-brew - ich)). Then doubled-back taking the shortest Calmac ferry journey in Scotland, (a distance of 410m) Colintrive to Rhubodach on the Island of Bute. Cycled across Bute to Rothesay. Had a beer with my cousin [REDACTED] who lives on the island. Then caught the third and final ferry from Rothesay to Wemyss Bay. Train from Wemyss Bay to Glasgow and then back to Edinburgh. Next time it's the five ferries ride Bute, Tighnabruich, Tarbet, Mull of Kintyre, Arran and ferry back to Ardrossan. As a foot note when visiting Sweden I found that ferries are part of the road network and are free at the point of delivery - the road ends you wait for a ferry you cross and carry on your way. Would wrapping the cost of free ferries into emissions tax promote inclusive rural economic growth out with the central belt?



15/08/2017 10:25 AM

We went in the opposite direction the week before, starting at Stornoway and gradually working our way down the islands to Barra. Absolutely stunning. We saw St Kilda on the horizon from Balranald on North Uist, but didn't visit. Also saw golden and white-tailed eagles, but no otters or corncrakes, which we were absolutely promised! :-)

14/08/2017 01:16 PM

The fact that St Kilda is almost inaccessible is probably something of a blessing in disguise for the local ecosystem. If large numbers of visitors were able to reach Hirta it might well cause damage.



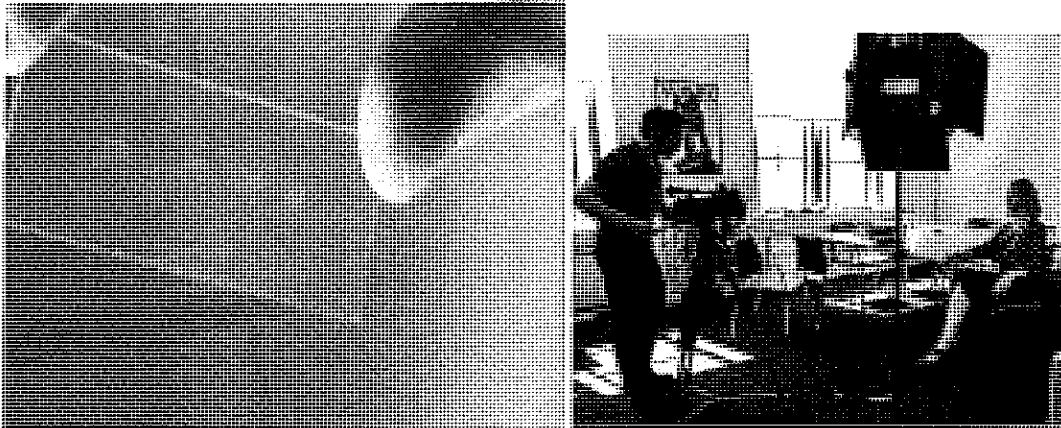
14/08/2017 01:10 PM

Looks like you were in St Kilda the week after me. I went out with Sea Harris - perfect weather, no one was ill on the boat, and we had five glorious hours to scramble round Hirta, enjoying the birds, the sheep and just imagine what life must have been like there. Given the hefty costs of most trips, and the challenging weather (the captain told us that climate change is having an impact), it's a privilege which most people in Scotland will sadly not get the chance to experience. Glad you made it!

14/08/2017 09:08 AM

Love St Kilda (or just Kilda if you believe the stories about the St being a mere smudge on a map!) sailed out last year. Nothing quite like arriving undersail in the dead of night and seeing the shadow of Hirta emerge out of the 2am sky. An astonishing place, a real national treasure and the NTS warden was fab.

Montrose Cabinet



21/08/2017

Last Tuesday I was with the Cabinet in Montrose, followed by the traditional public discussion in the town hall.

It reminded me of the value of these events and why I'm so proud of them. Firstly they show the sheer professionalism of our organisation both in terms of content (crisp and concise Ministerial briefing on local issues set in national context) and presentation (slick event management and communication).

Secondly, they demonstrate the Scottish Government's commitment to openness and transparency and hearing from communities and their experience. I know of very few governments which undertake this model of holding Cabinet Ministers to account in public, facing – completely un-moderated – views and questions, followed by direct one-to-one conversations afterwards.

Finally it provides a precious snapshot of those issues preoccupying local communities and individuals, whether these are about their country or their locality – absolute gold dust for those of us serving the public. I would encourage you to watch the video round-up on Saltire below. Staff with access can also watch the session in full on the [Scottish Government's YouTube channel](#).

I am working my way around Scotland, meeting staff working in Scottish Government offices around the country. So in Montrose I met with Marine Scotland colleagues working on research into freshwater fish populations and their habitats. I'm always struck by the diversity of Marine Scotland's work and it was fascinating to learn about scientific research, and see records (including tiny fish scales which not only tell the history of the individual fish but also their habitat) and help track and safeguard fish health in Scotland. Impressive.

Sir John Elvidge

I met with Sir John Elvidge, former Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government, and now, among other roles, Chair of Carnegie Trust UK. It was a timely meeting given our refresh of the [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) which began under his leadership ten years ago, and we reflected on progress made.

The NPF refresh takes place as we prepare the new Programme for Government (PfG), setting out the Government's priorities for the year ahead in the context of NPF outcomes. Both the PfG and NPF will feature in senior leaders events taking place in September. There is still time to register your interest in being #upfront at this event – more in [last week's blog](#).

Gardening and Craft Club show

I was pleased to be able to lend my support to the Scottish Government's Annual Gardening and Craft Club show taking place this Saturday, 26 August at Victoria Quay.

While I can't be there in person I will be making a virtual appearance courtesy of colleagues from the Club and the government's broadcast unit. Good luck to all taking part – save me a cake...

Comments (5)



24/08/2017 01:25 PM

As someone who provide material to support the travelling cabinet, it would be good if we could access the entire video of the Q&A session. 1 to see what questions where posed by the public and 2 to enable us to see how Ministers used the briefing provided and where we may need to tighten aspect in the future. Is this possible?



23/08/2017 10:30 AM

Is the audience in the video still: A/Bored B/Sceptical C/Disenfranchised or D/All of the above? Perhaps it would be a good idea if future photographs depict an audience that at least looks interested?



22/08/2017 02:13 PM

Thanks for the suggestion, East Lothian is in fact one of six local authority areas Cabinet is still to hold a meeting in (Cabinet has held 45 meetings across Scotland since 2008), so it is certainly on the radar for a future visit.
Cabinet Secretariat



22/08/2017 12:14 PM

It is the Honest Toun after all??



22/08/2017 07:14 AM

Why not have Cabinet in Musselburgh. After all, William-the-Lion longest serving Scottish Monarch held court there for a while before it moved back to Dunfermline??

Supporting colleagues



28/08/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

EU Nationals Network

This week I met with members of our EU Nationals Network. I am impressed by the energy and focus of this vibrant network which was only established this year. It offers both a 'safe space' for individuals to share experience and a collaborative approach, identifying areas for further information and for action.

Staff wellbeing is a key part of my role as Permanent Secretary and important for the Scottish Government as a responsible and responsive employer. I was pleased to hear network members say they feel supported by the organisation, particularly HR, but their stories illustrated the difficulties and uncertainties they are currently experiencing.

The network is working with HR to address their key concerns. Meanwhile it is important that all managers provide support to their non-UK EU national colleagues during this challenging time. I shall be discussing the experience and issues raised by other such networks with my UK Civil Service colleagues in the coming weeks.

You and your teams will want to keep well informed about Scottish Government work on the future relationship with the EU – I encourage you to read [Ken Thomson's blog](#) on operational readiness if you haven't already done so.

FoI performance

Colleagues within the Freedom of Information unit, and across government, have been working hard to improve on FoI performance and Minister for Parliamentary Business, Joe Fitzpatrick, thanked staff for their efforts when he spoke at Directors' Network last week. It is encouraging to see an increase in response rates, not least as an important part of our responsibility to increase the transparency of government and making information readily available to the public. The challenge will be to sustain this improvement. You can [contact the FoI team](#), headed up by [REDACTED], for help and support. Staff should also familiarise themselves with the [latest guidance](#).

Shadowing Mike Coupe

Last Monday I was in London to take part in reciprocal work shadowing with Sainsbury's CEO Mike Coupe, as part of a UK Civil Service/business leadership programme. [Mike previously came to St Andrew's House to shadow me for the day](#). It was fascinating to see a significant leader and very substantial business at close quarters – I hope to share my reflections on what we can learn from this at a future Directors' Network meeting.

Meeting with directors

Once again I am meeting with every director in the organisation for a short catch-up. During these sessions I am asking directors how they feel the organisation is helping them to perform at their best and to tell me something they think I should know about the organisation – positive or negative. DGs will be meeting with deputy directors to do the same. Having one-to-one contact with people you line manage is important – but hearing from others whom you may not see so often is just as important, and gives a much more rounded view of your team. Try it.

Comments (13)



██████████ 01/09/2017 02:53 PM

Not sure if this is in the Fol guidance already or not (it is very helpful but rather a lot of it with lots of different sections...) but something about checking the tracker for other similar ones - by topic and or person/organisation. We had one recently that was also asked of Social Security, Pensions Agency and Chief Medical Officer (submitted on the same day as it happens).



██████████ 28/08/2017 05:12 PM

██████████: I think we do need to test centralisation models that are manageable, whether based on DG/Directorates or on a functional basis, such as centralising reviews. I recognise that policy colleagues will know best what information is likely to exist, so I expect their role would remain important, even in a centralised scenario. We will look to engage with colleagues as we proceed and will evaluate the different options as we go.



██████████ 28/08/2017 02:34 PM

Great to hear that FoI handling is being considered, including the scope for greater centralisation. If it isn't possible at a corporate level could a central team be considered or trialled at a directorate/DG level? The starting point should obviously be that we want to meet our statutory duties, and fulfill the ministerial ambitions for openness and accessibility; but we should also consider the way of doing that which limits the impact on individuals and teams, and their ability to deliver for ministers across other priorities.

Edited to add that I like ██████████ suggestion of splitting information retrieval collation from response / applying exemptions.



██████████ 28/08/2017 02:30 PM

Passing thought - as someone who's been around long enough to remember the failure of the attempt to centralise drafting of Ministerial Correspondence many years ago: Could the burden of work best be shared by having a central team to take on the application of the exemptions and decisions on what to release, with policy (who will typically have a much clearer idea of what information is likely to exist on any given subject as they will often have been responsible for creating it) remaining responsible for search and retrieval of the information?



██████████ 28/08/2017 02:03 PM

Thank you for the very supportive and inclusive culture you are creating for all diversity networks in SG - it makes all the difference to those who otherwise experience exclusion on whatever grounds. Great to hear you plan to lead on supporting inclusive cultures across the UK civil service and Scottish public sector. Let us know how it goes and where we can help!



28/08/2017 02:00 PM
I agree with [redacted] comments. Knowledge of the exemptions and how they should properly be applied seems as important - if not more important - as an understanding of the policy/subject area.



28/08/2017 01:25 PM
[redacted] - yes we are considering having the FOI Unit test a centralised model as part of the improvement project. We will give careful thought to how this might operate as, with its current level of resource, the team will not be able to take on every FOI case SG receives. As [redacted] notes below, we are happy to hear of any suggestions from colleagues.



28/08/2017 12:46 PM
Resourcing FOI is a serious issue that needs to be resolved eventually if we are to achieve our goals with FOI and not adversely impact other areas of business. The end point here should be that 99.9% (for example...) of written advice etc produced by the SG and its agencies is placed on the internet, with the only material retained being what we would use a FOI exemption for if we received a request. The idea behind FOI is great, but it has never worked to the extent originally intended (here and in the wider UK). It still can, but we need to have a mental shift, and be willing to pay the cost in the short term, of moving to almost complete openness (one day we may even get to complete openness but that would take a fair amount of change within society to achieve).



28/08/2017 11:57 AM
Has consideration been given to a centralised FOI operational team taking on ownership and responsibility for dealing with FOI cases, engaging with relevant policy colleagues as necessary e.g. to understand any policy sensitivities. Part of the challenge for people who perhaps rarely deal with FOI is understanding exactly where the boundaries lie on applying, say, the free and frank exchange of views exemption. You have got to imagine a core team across the SG dealing with all FOI requests would lead to much improved consistency in decision making. There are advantages to the generalist approach we adopt across the SG so that those dealing with specific policy areas deal with things like correspondence, PQs etc. specific to their policy areas, but I wonder if a re-think is needed on keeping that approach for the statutory FOI regime.



28/08/2017 10:57 AM

The starting point for considerations around FOI must be that FOI is a statutory duty - as a Scottish public authority we are legally required to respond to FOI requests within statutory timescales and in accordance with the legislation. Ensuring that we meet our statutory obligations demonstrates good governance and also helps put into practice the First Minister's public commitment to lead the most accessible Government that Scotland has ever had. A FOI Improvement Project has been instigated to consider ways to improve internal FOI handling with a view to improving performance and one of the measures under active consideration is increased proactive publication. Should you be experiencing any issues, or have any suggestions for the FOI Improvement Project, please do contact the FOI Unit. We would be happy to discuss these matters with you.



28/08/2017 10:17 AM

I remember the trial well; my memory of not being given any information at all about how it turned out is also very sharp. Perhaps I should FOI it? Charging will be a difficult pill for Ministers to swallow, politically, but it has much to be said for it. Obviously there will then be an incentive for FOI work to be done at as high (and expensive) a grade as possible. While this is bad luck for our senior colleagues, I for one welcome it, and am sure that FOI requesters will benefit, as the material will be improved by their attentions in just the same way as all our other work does. On the other hand, I foresee some difficulty getting the item of the bill "for SpAd attention" past the Commissioner, so perhaps we should just drop that now.



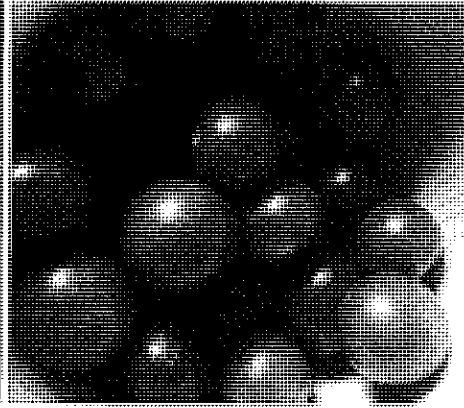
28/08/2017 10:13 AM

I agree with [redacted] My colleague and I have spent much of our time over the last few weeks working to meet the deadlines for response to seven FOIs from the same semi-journalist. We met the deadlines for the FOIs but at a cost to deadlines for our other work. We question the cost/value of the staff time involved (including quite a substantial amount of time at senior level) and the tight deadlines (all of our responses needed to be cleared by SPADs and some also by Ministers).

28/08/2017 08:29 AM

We need a discussion within the SG on the workload involved with FOIs. It can be considerable and the benefit to the people of Scotland and to democratic accountability of many FOIs is debatable. Indeed, I would argue that there is a disbenefit to some FOIs, as they can distract ministers, SPADS and officials from policy making and implementation. Perhaps it's time to charge for FOIs, particularly when they come from journalists? We also need to consider much more proactive publication of documents (there was a trial on this in Environment Group some 10 years ago) to reduce the need for FOIs. And consider further how to structure submissions etc so there is a clear split between factual information (generally releasable) and advice (where exemptions might apply).

Looking to the future



04/09/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Queensferry Crossing

The successful completion of the Queensferry Crossing – just six years after construction began and almost £250 million under budget – is a landmark achievement for the Scottish Government.

The First Minister and Cabinet Secretaries have praised the dedication and hard work of Transport Scotland, the delivery consortium and all those involved in this milestone project over the past 10 years and I want to add my congratulations and thanks too.

It not only provides a vital boost to Scotland's transport infrastructure, it supports the economy and has been a catalyst for employment and business opportunities since work began and is set to become a major tourist attraction.

I was one of the lucky 50,000 people who had the opportunity to walk across the bridge over the weekend – the unique setting and elegant engineering are inspirational.

Economic Growth

The First Minister's keynote speech sets out the pace and ambition of Government action to support growth, create jobs and seize future economic opportunities and is essential reading for all of us.

Sustainable inclusive economic growth is the overarching Purpose of our National Performance Framework – for which we all have a responsibility – and will also be highlighted in tomorrow's Programme for Government (PfG).

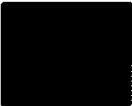

PfG required intensive work from many teams over the summer, underpinned by supple, collaborative cross-directorate working, and supported by effective – though often robust(!) – communication between civil servants and special advisors. It is a good example of joined-up policy development – vital for our outcome based approach. Thank you to all those involved.

Graduate Development Programme

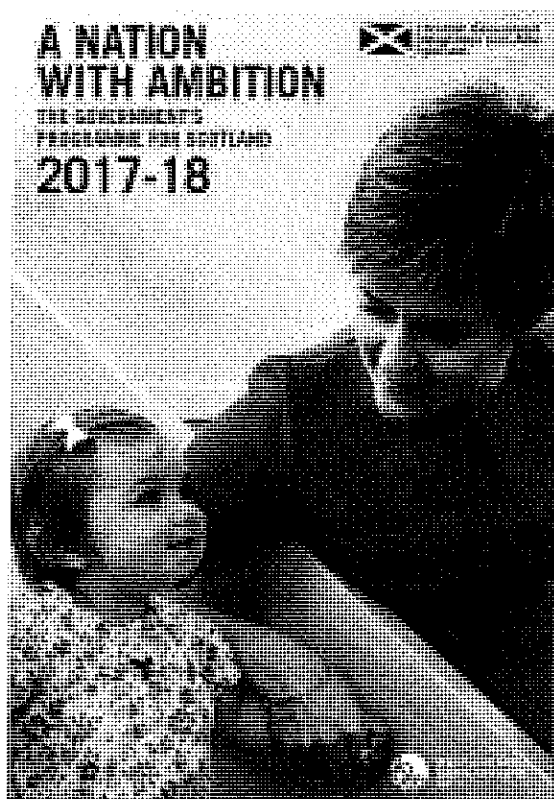
I met the new intake of the Graduate Development Programme last week. They were looking remarkably perky given the sheer level of information and advice received from colleagues across the organisation in their programme. I urged them to be bold and to question - and help us future proof how we work and test our readiness for the whatever might lie ahead.

Finally – a good year for the window box salad and tomatoes. How has your garden grown this summer?

Comments (1)

  04/09/2017 03:24 PM
Please note, the comments facility within this article will be disabled shortly ahead of a system upgrade tomorrow (Tuesday, 5 September).

Priorities ahead



10/09/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Programme for Government

The new parliamentary session began with the First Minister unveiling the ambitious 2017-18 Programme for Government (PfG) - we're now firmly back in the rhythm of 'term-time'.

PfG sets out the government's policy and legislative commitments - clear priorities which, as civil servants, we are charged with delivering. This includes areas which have received a great deal of media coverage in recent days - phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2032, continuing to reform education to help close the poverty related attainment gap and legislation on organ and tissue donation.

This will test us but also offer new opportunities. In keeping with our year round commitment to matching resources to priorities, some colleagues will find their work or focus shifts to enable fresh policy commitments to be met - some teams will grow and others will contract. But everyone will be working across and beyond portfolio boundaries - joining up with other policy and delivery teams on the cross cutting work inherent in so many of the PfG commitments. Page 73 of PfG illustrates this well.

Meanwhile work continues on the keystones of the PfG - the budget and the National Performance Framework (NPF) and our outcomes approach. The NPF is being refreshed after 10 years. Last Wednesday we held the first of two SCS Leading Together sessions, reflecting on our experience over this decade. Directors and deputy directors will be sharing insights and practical suggestions with their

teams as we recommit to Scottish Government outcomes and the working practices and behaviours this demands.

In the coming weeks the PfG team will be asking those directly involved about their experience of producing the PfG – warts and all. And they will be holding seminars in all main buildings and by video conference – do use these to get to know PfG and to ask questions about what it means for you and your teams.

Devolution 20 years on

Today marks the 20th anniversary of the 1997 referendum that led to devolution.

I cannot claim 20 years here - only a mere 17 - but I can see how far we've come as an organisation. As we look to what lies ahead – our wide ranging new powers and fiscal responsibilities, our accountability to, and relationship with, the citizens of Scotland and the uncertainty and complexity of the wider world, it is even more important that we are an open, capable and responsive organisation, poised and ready for the future – whatever that might be.

So my thanks to all Scottish Government colleagues, past and present, for your contribution to the organisation we are today and your commitment to the journey ahead. Twenty years represents a huge personal leap for some of us too. Did you play a role in making the 1997 referendum vote a reality?

Comments (5)

██████████ I didn't have a role in the referendum for a Scottish Parliament, but I did pay the invoice for the commemorative medals...which, with my luck, turned out to be the biggest controversy of the first day of business! <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/435795.stm>

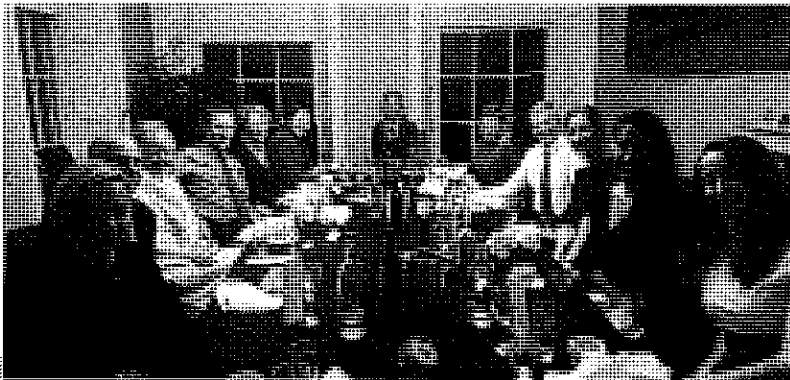
██████████ I didn't have a role in making the 1997 referendum vote a reality, but I was in Parliament Square when Tony Blair and Donald Dewar spoke about the opportunities ahead and Sheboom drummed. It did seem like a new start for Scotland, a sun filled day full of possibility and hope. It's been strange to see the clips on TV and remember that day, there was a strong sense of being part of history.

██████████ It would be useful to have an article on how matching resources to priorities is working in practice.

██████████ Thanks ██████████. We're speaking to colleagues in Corporate Communications about the range of ways we can update staff on cross-government work to match resources to priorities. We expect that will include a Saltire article in due course.

Evans L (Leslie) ██████████ - and meanwhile your own Deputy Director and Director will be able to talk you through the decisions and changes they have made and planned as a result of Matching Resources to Priorities and the additional resources we have secured and deployed for Government priorities.

Sharing feedback and strengthening relationships



25/09/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Social security agency

Last week the First Minister announced that Scotland's new Social Security agency will be headquartered in Dundee, with an additional site in Glasgow. The new agency is expected to create at least 1,500 jobs split evenly between the two cities.

This very important decision was informed by intensive analytical and policy work, and the team - led by [REDACTED]. Indeed there have been a number of times during past cabinet meetings, when ministers have complimented Scottish Government civil servants on the quality, pace and responsiveness of their work.

I am always so proud to hear unsolicited praise of this kind - it is passed onto the individuals and teams concerned. I also saw a personal thank you note from a minister to those who had supported

her during a particular busy period – another nice touch and great feedback for the team concerned. It is very important that we celebrate and mark work well done – how do you do this in your team?

Strengthening relationships

Last week I spoke at a dinner held by the [Institute of Directors](#) in their smart Edinburgh premises. It was interesting to hear the perspectives of the diverse businesses represented around the table - from finance and IT to higher education.

They were particularly animated about where the Scottish Government should place its efforts to best support the business community and where business should take up the challenge themselves. This is a theme echoed by the CBI who want to develop a 'business led' model of working with the Scottish Government. Many of us engage regularly with the business community, and to get the best from this investment we need to be clear and consistent about what we expect from this engagement and the action arising from it.


Who are we talking to, what's the exact purpose and, crucially, how do we apply insights gained to best effect across the Scottish Government? DG Economy's Strategic Business Engagement Team is undertaking work on this as part of their role highlighting everyone's responsibility to support an inclusive economy in Scotland. Please [contact the team](#) if you have questions, experience, or reflections to share, or if you want to know how best to approach the business community in your area of interest.

Raising funds to tackle homelessness

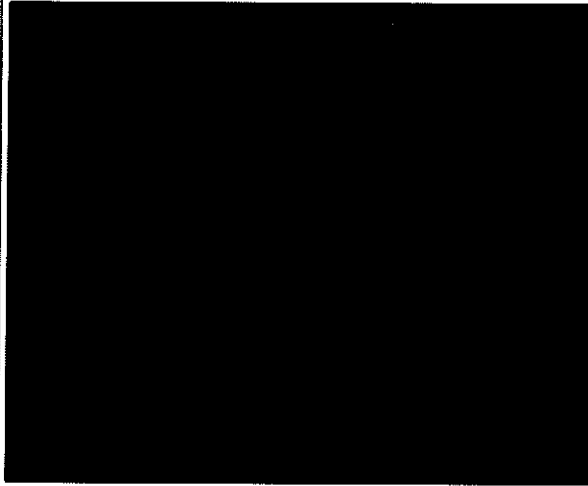
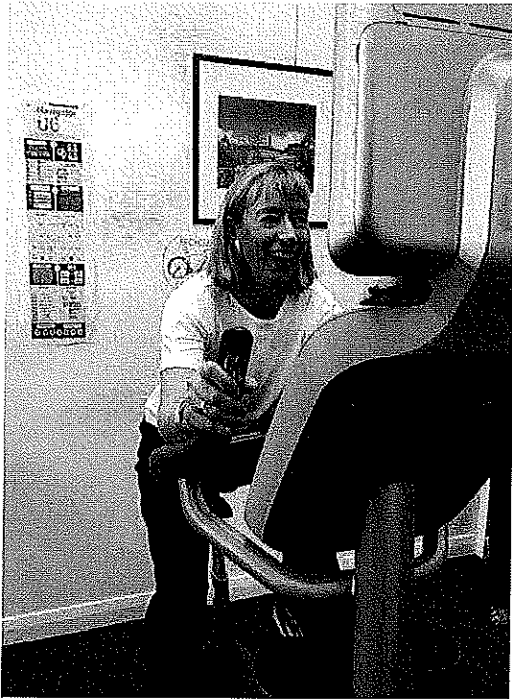
I've signed up to take part in [Sleep in the Park](#) once again, in December in Princes St Gardens. Organised by Social Bite, this is the world's largest outdoor sleepover which will raise funds to tackle homelessness in Scotland.

I'll be fundraising in the lead up to the event, including some bake sales that went down well last year. There is absolutely no pressure to give – I know how many of you already support very good causes in kind and cash – but if you'd like to donate, please [visit my Just Giving page](#).

Comments (1)

 Thanks for the name check for the Strategic Business Engagement Team. If you're interested in knowing more about the work the Team are taking forward, watch out on Saltire next week for more info or feel free to contact us.

Removing barriers and boundaries



03/10/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

As Permanent Secretary I combine my roles representing and promoting Scottish Government interests and as a member of the UK Civil Service senior leadership. I fulfilled both last week.

With Ken Thomson I welcomed members of the UK Civil Service Future Leaders Scheme to St Andrew's House, discussing how the Scottish Government balances domestic responsibilities with broader EU and international policy.

Fog meant I couldn't get to London for my weekly Whitehall trip , but I contributed my views to the Civil Service Board's important discussions on SCS pay, staff resources for work on Exiting the EU, and staff communications, including the fact that the UK Civil Service actually serves three governments in the UK.

Interrupting violence

Another aspect of my role which I value is hearing and seeing how government public policy shapes and improves front line services. We need services tailored and responsive to the needs of the

individual, and focussed wherever possible on prevention – reducing the need for greater interventions down the line.

I witnessed a good example at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Less than a third of emergency department patients who are victims of violence report the incident to the police.

The Violence Reduction Unit's Navigator Programme uses the opportunity presented when a patient is admitted to hospital, to help people with chronically violent lifestyles, drug addition, domestic abuse or in vulnerable circumstances, to gain access to vital services.

Often after they leave hospital they return home to the problem that led them there in the first place. It was inspiring to hear the passion and commitment from staff – both medical and non-medical.

I was also delighted to kick start the Navigator's 'Running on Empty Fund'. Lots of people gave up time and money to support this worthy cause.

Getting it right for every child

I seldom attend meetings with Cabinet Secretaries and their DGs and Directors, but Mr Swinney was keen that I attend his meeting with representatives from the Children in Scotland Strategic Forum.

We questioned how joined up we are on our support for Children and Young People and where we spend our time and effort to best effect in what can be a complex policy and delivery landscape.

Our work on Children and Young People is particularly important to me, and I want to ensure we use the Programme for Government and 2018 Year of Young People as an opportunity to act on this feedback.

People Survey 2017

The annual People Survey is now live and will run until 31 October 2017. I've set a target of increasing our response to the survey by an additional 5% of this year. Why? It represents the best opportunity for people to say what they really feel about working here – warts and all.

If we're going to be the open, responsive and capable organisation as described by staff responses to SG2020 then hearing your experience is crucial. Please complete it – if you don't express an opinion I can only assume you are absolutely satisfied with life here....

Congratulations

Finally, congratulations to [REDACTED] known to many as a very friendly and professional member of our [REDACTED] recently married her partner, [REDACTED].

Comments (7)

[REDACTED] my congratulations - what fabulous news!

[REDACTED] What were the outcomes of the meeting with the Children in Scotland Strategic Forum? This is likely to be of interest to the family law team in the Justice Directorate.

██████████ Congratulations, ██████ You guys look so happy... and fabulous

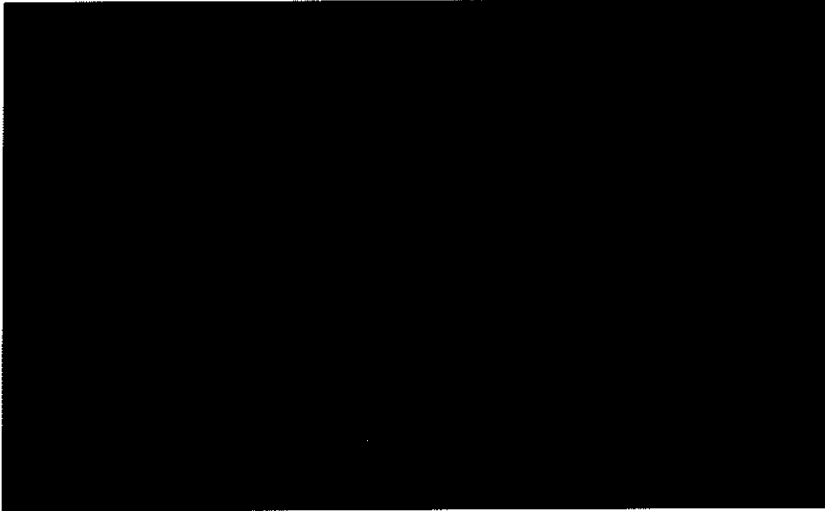
██████████ Interesting to read the PS has set a target of increasing our response to the People survey by an additional 5% this year. Why this specific increase percentage figure and how the PS seeks to achieve this would be even more interesting.

██████████ Combining "roles representing and promoting Scottish Government interests and as a member of the UK Civil Service senior leadership" must be a bit like serving both God and Mammon. Arguably respectively. I would be (possibly morbidly) interested in an article on the issues such a role may throw up!

██████████ Great picture of ██████. Best wishes to you and ██████.

██████████ Lovely photo ██████ - you look radiant! Congrats and best wishes to you and ██████ for the future x

Testing our capabilities



09/10/2017

Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Many of you were involved in the Border Reiver counter terrorism exercise last week. This was a full scale emergency operation, testing Scotland's capabilities and response to multiple security incidents.

It was a valuable opportunity to test our systems, and how we work together, with our partners, Whitehall and the UK Government. As I was reading the mock website of social media coverage, hearing about numbers of dead and injured during a Scottish Government Resilience Room (SGoRR) meeting and attending a Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBRA) meeting chaired by Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, it all felt surprisingly and terribly real. The Scottish Government's resilience team led the organisational response and supported the First Minister and other ministers in their responsibilities. We shall have a full report to consider. My initial verdict? I saw much to be proud of in our collective response, but also lots to learn from the exercise, and to ensure that we are as ready as possible to respond in such circumstances.

London calling

Race equality in society and in the civil service were the subjects under discussion with my Perm Sec colleagues in London this week. This is one of my own priority objectives for 17/18. I think Whitehall is further ahead on some approaches to race equality in the civil service and I want us to learn from their experience. I shall be sharing what I heard with Director Generals and our new Head of Diversity – [REDACTED]. Meantime do read [Joe Griffin's guest blog](#) about the Race Equality Conference on 26 October.

Whilst in London I also invited the Permanent Secretary to Welsh Government, Shan Morgan, to see Scotland House. She was very impressed with the facilities and the 'feel' of the place. So was [REDACTED] from my office who accompanied me to London to catch up with Sir Jeremy Heywood's support team, and find out more about my 'Wednesday in London' regime, including the 4.30am rise.

Bound for Inverness

Finally I left London on the Caledonian Sleeper to spend Thursday in beautiful Inverness. I met with colleagues from Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage (Francesca Osowska started there on Monday as CEO), the Crofting Commission, Highland Council and the newly formed Scottish Land Commission. I also spent time hearing from staff at Longman House who wanted to hear more about Brexit and tell me about their frustrations with the office premises and quality of communication with our central belt offices. Lots to address here which I'm asking the Estates team to action.

Several staff at Longman told me they had watched the EU exit staff engagement events hosted by Michael Russell, Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, and Ken Thomson, DG Constitution and External Affairs online. It's important that as many colleagues as possible are party to discussions on priority issues like exiting the EU. I have asked Comms to ensure we provide online coverage of such events whenever possible and to organise forums and channels to continue these conversations.

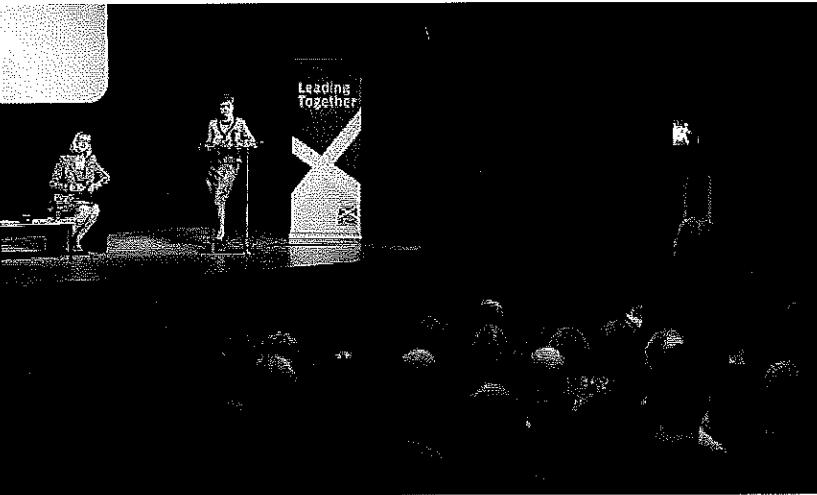
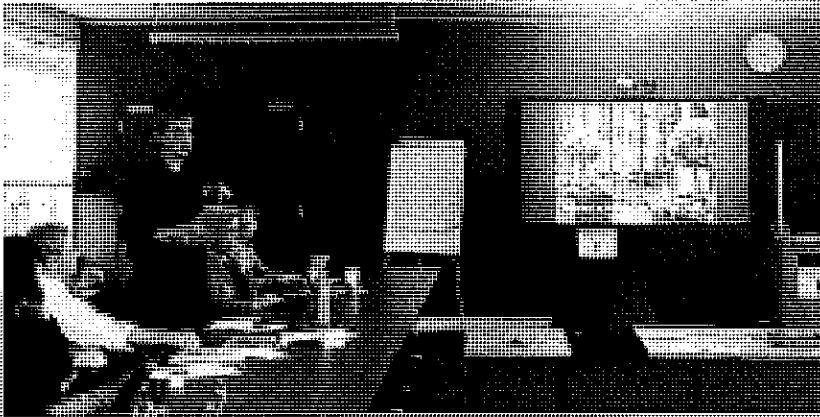
Back to school

Finally, I returned to my old school in Sheffield on Monday - the first time since I had been in the building since receiving my A level results, not a great day - where I gave a speech to 16 and 17 year old pupils.

My time at High Storrs had a big influence on my own values and views. I cultivated skills there which I still apply today – the propensity to be curious, the ability to analyse and inform my opinion and the appetite to question everything. It was great fun to return and an honour to be asked to give a keynote speech.

Comments (0)

Celebrating success and building for the future



24/10/2017

Civil Service Awards 2017

I am very proud that the Scottish Government and its agencies have been shortlisted for five of the 2017 Civil Service Awards. Congratulations to [REDACTED], Food Standards Scotland, Transport Scotland, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and the Parliamentary Counsel team. Your passion, professionalism and determination is inspirational – everyone has their fingers crossed.

Shadowing experience

As part of the Whitehall Industry Group Permanent Secretary/Chief Executive Insight Days Programme, Mike Coupe Sainsbury's CEO, spent a day with me earlier this year.

I returned the shadow experience a few weeks back. I shared observations and how these translate into Scottish Government interests at our weekly Directors' meeting. These included:

- high quality and productive feedback loop, including crisp performance data and analysis but also, and importantly, including views and experience of frontline staff and perceptions of customers
- time is money – saving partners' and contractors' time saves us money
- a strong collective ownership of the organisation's performance and each person clear about his/her personal accountability for, and contribution to, this success

London

I was pleased to be asked to attend this year's Women of the Year Awards in London, alongside more than 400 women from all walks of life, there to celebrate women's achievements and contribution to society.

Although there were plenty of stars of stage and screen present, it was the stories of bravery and personal achievement which really made an impact. Listening to the firefighters who attended Grenfell Towers, and to the first responders at the Manchester bombings were particularly powerful moments.

Whilst in London, I also met with the Permanent Secretary to the Welsh Government, Shan Morgan, and the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, David Sterling. All three of us stayed on to attend the regular meeting on Brexit between senior officials of the UK Government and the devolved administrations. Operational readiness was the main agenda item, including how individual UK Government Departments are intending to work to best effect with devolved administration policy areas and agencies.

First Minister and Permanent Secretary staff events

Yesterday was the first of two staff events with the First Minister. Staff asked questions on SG2020, inclusive growth, PfG and supporting young people.

Staff who are unable to attend the Edinburgh event next week can still shape the discussion by suggesting questions in advance via Slido - [REDACTED] - which is open until Thursday at 12 noon.

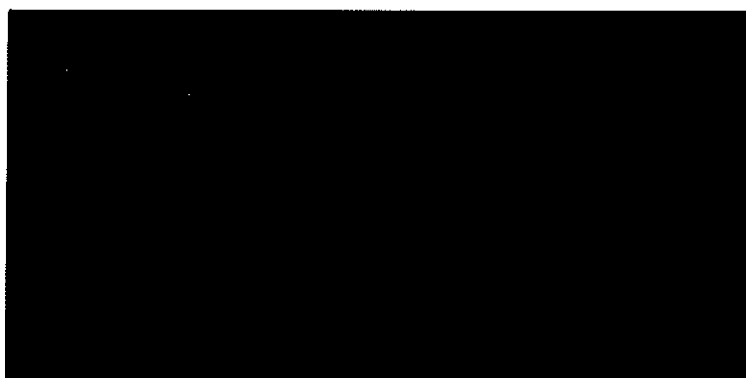
Keep an eye on Saltire for feedback on both the events from Wednesday, 1 November.

People Survey 2017

A reminder that the deadline to complete the annual [People Survey](#) is 31 October 2017. I would urge you to complete the survey. And if you decide not to complete it – are you confident as to how and where your voice and views will be heard?

Comments (0)

Growing as an organisation



30/10/2017

The Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Race and Ethnicity Conference

I was proud to hold the Scottish Government's first annual conference on race and ethnicity last week as part of Black History Month.

The recently published [UK Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) sets a challenging ambition for the civil service to become the most inclusive employer in the UK by 2020. Nested within that is the Scottish Government's own strategy and determination to be a world-leading, diverse employer where people can be themselves at work.

My own objectives include improving race and diversity in the Scottish Government. But what matters more to me than targets is how the culture of our organisation reflects and supports inclusion and greater diversity. Culture is shaped by how we behave towards each other, where power resides – and

where people believe power resides - where and how decisions are taken, and organisational traditions and unwritten rules.

I reminded the audience 'What you permit you promote'. Every time we tolerate something, ignore something or fail to recognise or register something which sits at odds with a fair and open organisation - we are condoning it.

A more inclusive workplace is right and fair not only because we want to attract the best talent and reflect the communities we serve, but because we know - and evidence shows - that a diverse workforce can be more productive, more innovative and ultimately more successful.

Thinking Time

Halfway through the reporting year, the Executive Team undertook dedicated 'thinking time' offsite with support and challenge from one of the Scottish Government's non-exec directors. Amongst other things we discussed (and commissioned further work on) good governance and how we communicate decisions to the wider organisation. Minutes can never do justice to the rich deliberations behind some of our most important decisions - many of which impact on everyone here. We agreed that DGs and their teams have an important role in sharing the motivation and rationale behind these decisions regularly and consistently throughout their families.

People Survey – last chance to have your say

The People Survey closes tomorrow (Tuesday, 31 October) at 23:59 and I want everyone to have their say. If you haven't already done so please complete the short survey giving your views on our organisation and how we make improvements for the future. It matters.

Celebrating excellence

I had another #proudpermsec moment last week as [REDACTED]

And I paid a surprise visit to the Queensferry Crossing Secretariat Office to say farewell [REDACTED]

Stay tuned

Tomorrow (Tuesday, 31 October) the First Minister and I will hold our second staff event where we will discuss PfG, SG2020, inclusive growth, supporting young people and whatever else the audience throws in. Look out for our video highlights on Saltire soon.

Comments (10)

Foggo R (Richard) Awesome [REDACTED] and generous as always. You are an inspiration.

Allison B (Barbara) Delighted for you [REDACTED]. Very well deserved.

[REDACTED] Well recognised and deserved

██████████ Thanks all but it's not just me; there are lots of people working hard across SG to ensure that we support our people and encourage them. The LGBTI committee do a huge amount individually and collectively and the network continues to grow. The Allies have brought a lot of support and commitment which is much appreciated. And ██████████ and the diversity team have been unstinting in their determination to make SG a better place for everyone. Seeing the rainbow lanyards proliferate round the organisation, reading the conversations on Yammer and walking alongside senior colleagues on Pride marches makes me really proud to be an SG civil servant.

██████████ Congratulations ██████████! Great news and well deserved!

██████████ Well done ██████████!

██████████ Years ago I took up the across SG offer to attend Strategic Board as an observer. I was really struck by the respectful yet challenging debates that took place and the fact that people like me were getting to hear them. It made me feel more positive about our organisation. So the comment about minutes not being enough to do justice to the deliberations chimed with me. These kind of observer opportunities are great - I don't know where they are on offer now at a corporate level.

██████████ Thirded. ██████████ - well deserved :-)

██████████ A good week for SG last week in terms of our journey towards being a diverse and inclusive organisation - the hugely successful Race Equality conference ██████████

██████████ Well done ██████████

Partnerships and values



06/11/2017

The Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Convention of the Highlands and Islands

It was an early start last Monday as I travelled to Oban for the Convention of the Highlands and Islands (CoHI). I know from recent visits to Tiree, Lewis, Harris, Skye, Benbecula, and Inverness that the EU, population, inclusive growth and investment in infrastructure are big issues within these communities, including the specifics of broadband, housing and transport.

Having not attended CoHI for a few years I was struck by the strategic alignment of priorities around the table. There are differences of course - but the convention presents a coherent and distinctive voice for the region, and a model of high quality and mature partnership working from which others could learn.

Discussions with staff

The First Minister and I have met around 700 staff over the past two weeks to discuss priorities and hear views on issues including Brexit, SG2020, Programme for Government, prioritisation, mental health, welfare powers and even guising. I know the First Minister values these events and hearing directly from colleagues. We intend to hold them annually and are exploring how colleagues outside the central belt can access them too. The video below gives a flavour.

Sexual harassment

Recent media reports about alleged sexual harassment at Westminster and Holyrood are deeply concerning. My position is clear - there is no place for harassment or discrimination of any kind in the Scottish Government and our commitment to promoting a positive and inclusive workplace is unwavering. We all have the right to go to work and live our lives free of abuse and intimidation.

I have agreed with the First Minister that we shall review our policies and processes to check that they are effective and well understood. The review will be done carefully but quickly, through an acceleration of work already underway as part of the People Plan.

This is about culture and behaviour as much as policies and process. We all have a part to play in creating a positive culture by making sure that we treat others with respect and dignity and by calling it out when that doesn't happen. What you permit you promote – so it includes each of us challenging unacceptable behaviour, reporting incidents and supporting colleagues, regardless of whether the perceived harassment, victimisation, discrimination or bullying is intentional or unintentional.

I wrote to all staff on this issue last week and I again want to offer reassurance that if you raise an issue, you will be supported and the matter will be properly investigated. There are processes and support in place for reporting any concerns or misconduct. It is important that we talk sensibly and responsibly about this as an organisation – please talk to me or any other member of the senior leadership team directly.

People Survey – thank you

The People Survey 2017 closed last Tuesday and I'm delighted that our response rate is the highest it's been since 2014. 78% (5,058) of Scottish Government core staff members completed the survey – a 5% increase on last year's response rate.

I realise that this may mean the survey results are more critical, but I want to hear everyone's experience – good and bad – of working here. A high completion rate is vital if we are to make genuine, meaningful and consistent improvement. And views expressed in the survey also inform how we create a positive, inclusive culture and a responsive, open and capable organisation. The team will now undertake detailed analysis but I want to thank those of you who took time to complete the survey - your views will shape the future of the organisation.

Comments (0)

Economy matters



13/11/2017

The Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Economic literacy

You will all be familiar with the Government's [National Performance Framework](#) and its overarching purpose - supporting all of Scotland to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth. Quite simply the economy underpins every aspect of Scottish Government activity. Every one of us has a responsibility to understand Scotland's economic performance. And as 50% of the Scottish budget will soon be funded directly by revenues raised within Scotland, the organisation needs a deeper collective grasp of the economic context within which we all operate and how we each support economic drivers in our own areas of operation, helping to grow the inclusive economy.

So it's part of our day and daily work to keep abreast of the economic context - quarterly GDP and Labour Market [stats](#), [living wage](#) policy, and news items such as interest rates. Over the coming weeks, Saltire will feature a series of pieces setting out our cross-government approach to driving forward the economic vision set out in the [Programme for Government](#). Meanwhile the Need to Know app on Saltire will continue to flag hot economy stories - so stay tuned and keep informed.

Kindness in public policy

Last week I took part in the Carnegie Trust's roundtable on the place of 'kindness' within public policy. It was an exploratory discussion but resonated with the Scottish Government's focus on improving outcomes, the preventative and coproducing approach, and our policies on inclusive economic growth and greater community empowerment.

Remembrance gathering

On Friday we held a new kind of Remembrance event in St Andrew's House, intended to be more accessible and inclusive to a greater number of colleagues, and I was delighted to see so many of you there, including many younger colleagues. Leaders from the Christian, Muslim and Humanist communities joined us to remember with respect and pride all those who made the ultimate sacrifice, to pay tribute to our veterans and those who continue to serve today.

It was also a time to remember colleagues who have passed away over the past year whilst in employment with the Scottish Government. We remembered our valued colleagues and dear friends - Robert Lennox, Anne Scott, Roy McLachlan, David Gilmour, John Calder, John Glassford, Helen Cameron and Charles Hamilton.

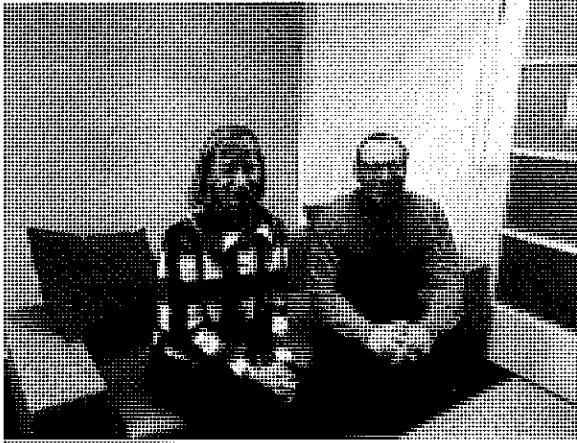
In-year reviews

Finally, I have been undertaking in-year reviews and have my own coming up as will many of you. Do make the most of this opportunity to reflect on your role, your contribution, your learning and resilience – they all matter.

Comments (1)

██████████ I've heard from a few colleagues that they were glad they attended the Remembrance Event in SAH. However, I was wondering why there didn't seem to be any official period of silence to allow all SG staff to mark the event.

People make SG



20/11/2017

People Survey

No one understands our organisation – our culture, our strengths, our vulnerabilities, our flaws and our opportunities - better than us. The People Survey is a vital source of information on our experience of working here - the good and the not so good. So I was delighted to see a 5% increase in our response rate - at 78% it is the highest since 2014 – and ahead of UK Civil Service, which was 67%.

These results reflect what I see day in, day out – an engaged, motivated and committed civil service; energetic and positive about the future. Thank you to each one of the 5,058 colleagues for sharing your views on what's working and where we can each help to improve our working experience.

These results highlight an area of which I am particularly proud - 81% of colleagues who feel we foster a culture of inclusion and fair treatment - five percentage points higher than the overall UK Civil Service score. I know these are values we all hold dear - responses to my recent letters and Saltire blogs testify to this

A high number of people also feel their manager recognises success, is open to ideas, and is considerate of work/life balance. And the leadership and managing change score - 46% positive – shows an increase of three percentage points on last year. There is more to do to ensure high quality and consistent line management throughout the organisation. But this improvement tells us that our investment in this area is making a difference and that we should continue to develop our capability as managers and leaders in an uncertain world.

These results show that the aspirations of SG2020 – becoming the open, capable and responsive organisation we want and need to be – are taking hold. These results will shape our continued work towards this vision.

Alzheimer Scotland

Following Cabinet Alzheimer Scotland gave a powerful presentation on dementia and challenging the stigma of the condition. I know many of us have family or friends living with this devastating illness - I do. And for me the overwhelming message was one of compassion, understanding and inclusion.

Meeting Benny and Bonnie

Last week I met with Benny Higgins, incumbent CEO of Tesco Bank, to discuss his work on the implementation plan to create a Scottish National Investment Bank. This is a key piece of work and Benny was clear about the pace and innovation it requires of government and our partner agencies. He was complimentary about the support he had received from the civil service to date.

Almost as impressive as Benny, was Bonnie the Seal, official mascot for Glasgow 2018, who is doing a great job promoting this fantastic multi-sporting event. She even gave me her business card!

Sleep out – join me!

You may have seen posters around St Andrew's House for my bake sale on 30 November (10.45am – 1st floor North) to raise funds for Social Bite – please come along.

But this year I'm inviting you to do more than eat cake – we still have places for colleagues to take part in the sleep out on 9 December. It'll be freezing, uncomfortable and exhausting but one of the most rewarding nights you'll ever have - raising funds to tackle homelessness in Scotland.

Comments (6)

██████████ I have been accepted as a volunteer in Aquatics - Glasgow 2018. Looking forward to seeing which venue I am allocated.

██████████ Am I the only one who finds Bonnie the Seal slightly sinister? Maybe it is the combination of seal and human characteristics? Like Bonnie was a creation of Doctor Moreau. :-) I do wonder what happens to mascots once the event is over. Is there a Home for Old Mascots?

██████████ Alzheimer's and related conditions are a huge challenge for those of us designing public services and I am glad that awareness is growing. Even a few years ago the challenges and needs of people with dementia were rarely considered as it was thought they'd have advocates do everything for them. Awareness of the huge numbers of people with early stage dementias and who are still functioning in society, workplaces, etc. is changing that assumption thankfully. Designing things well for people with dementia is a great investment - if it works for PwD it works for everyone.

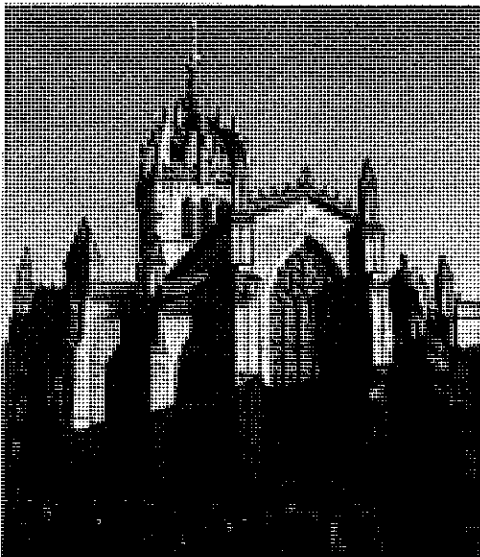
For folks on Twitter there are some incredible people with dementia sharing their lived experiences that I have personally found hugely informative and insightful - for example @WendyPMitchell and @TommyTommytee18 to name but two.

██████████, I would completely agree that we need to raise awareness of the needs and challenges of those people with dementia related illnesses. I hope that when you talk about designing public services for their needs, you are also thinking of the needs of their primary carers - be that husband, wife, partner, son, daughter etc. Too often I would suggest their needs are forgotten and the support for these carers around Scotland varies widely. They need advocates too.

██████████ Leslie I have signed up to take part in the Sleep Out (my colleagues can expect a begging email shortly!). What are your top tips to help prepare for the experience.

Evans L (Leslie) ██████████ Well done you - good luck with fundraising. I'm not sure you can prepare for it but having the right warm, waterproof and thermal gear helps - layers are the answer I found..Also being very tired helps - I was surprised I slept at all but I did off and on. Of course all this demonstrates that experiencing this one night cannot compare to what it feels like to sleep rough - but we can use it to best effect to raise money to tackle real homelessness

Celebrating success



04/12/2017

The Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans looks back on the week

Civil Service Awards

My #proudpermsec hashtag was put to good use last week when I accompanied shortlisted SG colleagues to the [Civil Service Awards](#) to recognise their outstanding work and achievements. The Transport Scotland team won the 'Project Delivery Excellence Award' for the impressive Queensferry Crossing. The [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\)](#) team won in the 'Use of Evidence' category for their innovative work on making data useful, accessible and applicable in communities across Scotland.

Congratulations to all nominees and winners – you have set a formidable example of civil service excellence and secured the best Scottish showing ever at these awards. And I have my fingers crossed for further success this evening with eight teams nominated across five categories at the [Scottish Public Service Awards](#).

Busy times

December is a busy month with the publication of the [Scottish Government Draft Budget](#) on 14 December. It's an intense time for the budget team, and for the organisation as a whole, not least as – with the deployment of new tax powers and pressure on the public purse continues – public and parliamentary interest builds and scrutiny of decisions, priorities and delivery deepens. Many of you will have end of year deadlines too. Our focus on delivery and meeting commitments is important – but so is making the time to challenge, improve, learn and share as we go.

Social Media

Recent research conducted via the People Panel shows that we are increasingly using social media for work purposes to connect, share and communicate with speed and impact. This is an important and effective channel of communication and one I make use of myself - [@PermSecScot](#). As civil servants we must always be aware of how our words could be interpreted by different audiences and even at different times - so please refresh your understanding of our [social media guidance](#). And do post with care. If it feels wrong, open to misinterpretation or mischief or just risky - don't post or endorse.

Elsie Inglis Centenary

I attended the centenary commemoration for Dr Elsie Inglis last week to celebrate the great contribution she made to medicine, patient care during WWI and women's suffrage. Her qualities - resilience, creative thinking, kindness and sheer determination to make a difference - are as relevant today as they were 100 years ago. When Dr Inglis asked the War Office if female doctors and surgeons could serve in front-line hospitals during WWI she was told 'my good lady, go home and sit still'. Thank goodness she refused.

Comments (0)

Catch up with Perm Sec



11/12/2017

Public Service Awards

Following the best ever Scottish showing at the Civil Service Awards, we had another opportunity to celebrate civil service excellence at the Scottish Public Service Awards.

Well done to [REDACTED] and to the whole team for their work on finding digital solutions for public sector challenges. The 'North Ayrshire Inclusive Growth Pilot', a partnership between the Scottish Government and North Ayrshire Council, was awarded the Policy Development Award for their excellent inclusive growth pilot. And Transport Scotland's Forth Replacement Crossing Employer's Delivery Team scooped The Project and Programme Management Award – another deserved accolade for the team.

We worked hard to identify and present some of our most innovative and impactful projects and programmes for awards this year. It's never too early to start thinking about next year - will your work qualify?

Catch ups

As we approach 2018 and the Year of Young People, I met with Jackie Brock, CEO of Children in Scotland. Empowering young people to achieve their potential is an issue close to my heart and will be a priority for me next year as I champion this cause and challenge both our own organisation and stakeholders to think differently, step up and invest in children and young people.

I was also in London for my regular catch up with colleagues at the UK Government and devolved administrations. These regular visits mean a 4.30am rise, the vagaries of travel and being out of the office for a full day. But the benefits of sharing, learning and promoting our organisation and its interests are clear. I encourage you all to keep up and invest in relationships with your civil service counterparts.

Away Day

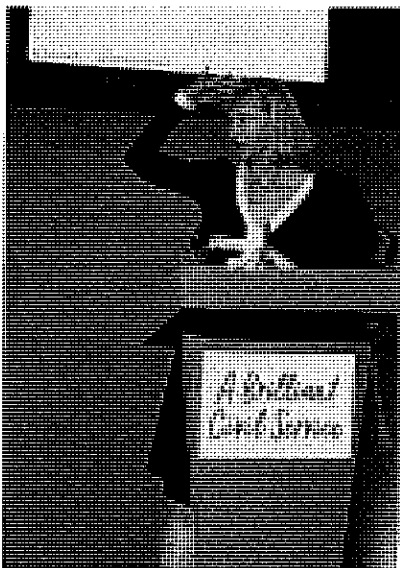
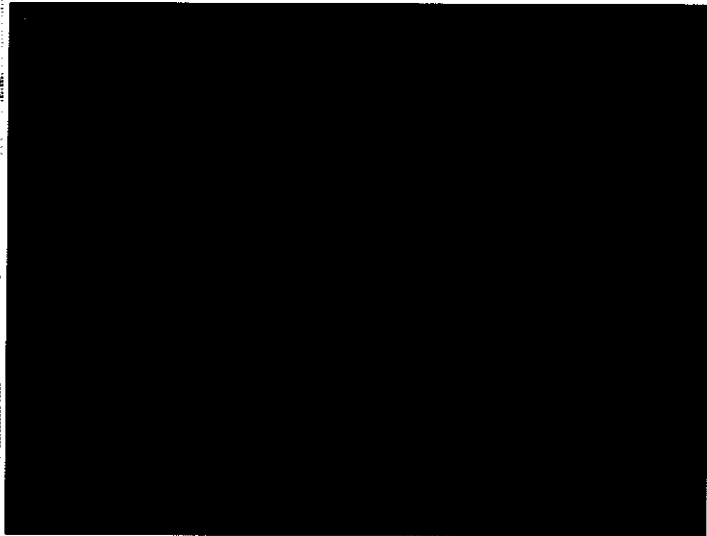
I was with DGs at a half-day session off site last week. We focused on our individual roles and responsibilities for leading, managing and supporting change as part of SG2020. How does each DG, and the team as a whole help the organisation become a more open, responsive and capable organisation? We also discussed the new function of DG Scottish Exchequer. Alyson's role is about bringing strategic coherence and challenge to the Government in meeting the needs of further devolution of fiscal powers, and the continued fiscal accountability this brings. Over 50% of expenditure is to be financed by tax revenues by 2019/20 – this makes demands of each of us, including increased understanding and economic literacy right across the organisation.

Social Bite

On Saturday I joined many hundreds of people sleeping out overnight in Princes Street Gardens to raise funds to tackle homelessness. I was proud to see so many SG staff braving the cold for the night and raising money to help make a difference. It was freezing and uncomfortable but we each knew we had a home and a bed to return to. Homeless people face isolation, fear and insecurity every day - there's still time to donate and help to end homelessness in Scotland.

Comments (0)

Perm Sec - round up of 2017



18/12/2017

What a Year

This is a good time to reflect on what we've achieved and delivered as an organisation. 2017 has been intense, uncertain, and frequently pretty testing but I have been proud to witness the professional, ambitious, creative and innovative response of the civil service throughout. The video below captures some of my personal highlights - you and your team will have your own. Do make sure you celebrate and mark them before the year is out.

Meantime these are my 'stand out' achievements:

The devolution of new powers heralds real opportunities to grow as an organisation and as a country. Implementing new social security powers has demanded creative thinking and fresh policy design, including a focus on the individual and hearing at first hand the experiences and views of

some of our most vulnerable citizens. Colleagues are going the extra mile to shape a service that meets the needs of its users. That journey continues next year, working towards the new agency being fully operational and open in Dundee and Glasgow by 2021.

We have pursued organisational readiness for the UK to leave the EU, across all policy and service areas. Our ability to anticipate, prepare, respond and adapt in a constantly changing and uncertain landscape is evident here, and work continues.

I've been struck by the slick and collaborative approach we embody as an organisation. Teams from across SG worked together to deliver a strong and ambitious Programme for Government focused on outcomes. The Draft Budget 2018/19 has been the most demanding yet, reflecting our move to a tax raising administration. Financial and economic planning and forecasting dovetailed with tough and intensive analysis and scrutiny undertaken by directorates. Ministers have praised the quality, pace and application of the civil service work evident in this process.

The opening of the Queensferry Crossing was a major milestone in 2017 and the team has rightly been recognised with several awards. The Crossing is a key element of Scotland's infrastructure, as well as a catalyst for employment and business opportunities. I was one of the lucky 50,000 people to walk the bridge before it opened to traffic.

SG2020 has continued in order to make us a more open, capable and responsive organisation - just as you asked to do in the original visioning exercise. We have shaken up our governance structures to ensure greater transparency and better accountability in our decision taking. We have matched resources to priorities with 50% of social security vacancies staff resourced from SG or SG Agencies. We are investing £19 million in new workspaces and have reduced non-staff expenditure by 26%. And we are seeing some of the impact of SG 2020 within the People Survey, with Leadership and Managing Change improving 3%.

I was so pleased to take part in Pride Edinburgh and hold our first annual conference on race and ethnicity - both events echo our values as an organisation. And those values matter - we've risen 163 places in two years on the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, and we've achieved the highest possible recognition the UK-wide Disability Confident Scheme - ensuring our workplace is welcoming and inclusive to disabled applicants and colleagues. You all play a part in shaping this organisation and defining 'who we are'.

Social Bite

I took part in Social Bite's Sleep in the Park last weekend. Thank you to everyone who sponsored me, made or bought cake or simply passed on their good wishes. I raised over £2,500 in all due to your generosity and support.

Finally

Thank you for all your hard work this year. Enjoy time off over the holidays with family and friends - I hope to undertake some walking, baking and sleeping, not necessarily in that order. I very much look forward to working with you in 2018.

Signing off with some festive fun - this pic from the Civil Service Awards needs a caption - your (printable - I know what some of you are like...) suggestions below please!

Comments (26)

Evans L (Leslie) If ever I needed proof of civil service wit, literary and cultural credentials and general tongue in cheek humour this was it... thank you all! I shall continue to perfect my dab shapes over the break..

██████████ Ship ahoy! On the starboard bow!!

██████████ Leslie's knife throwing act put the 'brilliant' into Brilliant Civil Service.

██████████ Has anyone seen Scott Brown?

██████████ You put your right hand in, your right hand out,

A Brilliant Civil Service.

That's what it's all about,

You do the Hokey Cokey and you turn around,

That's what it's all about.....

██████████ This year I'm sporting the latest 4' by 2' white wafer hat. Subtle and understated, ideal for any advertising hoard. Call me on 0300 xyz wxyz for pricing details.

██████████ I can see clearly now, the rain is gone,

We can beat all obstacles in our way

Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind

It's gonna be a bright (bright), bright (bright)

Sun-Shiny day.

██████████ Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum!

██████████ Is that the coffee over there?

██████████ I can't see what bread has Ken baked today!

██████████ Is there anybody out there?

██████████ I'll take my next question from.... yes the unicorn at the back there?

██████████ What's that coming over the hill..

██████████ Is it a Minister?

██████████ Right, who's the smart guy that put superglue on the back of my right hand?

██████████ There's Klingons on the starboard bow!

██████████ Is that another punk rock revival on the horizon...

██████████ Now if he takes the grain back and leaves the hen and takes the fox....

██████████ Oh no - is that another challenge coming our way?????

██████████ I think this is how you dab.

██████████ Permanent secretary tries to get down with the youth and attempts the dab (ask your kids they will explain it)

██████████ The future's so bright, I just wish Perm Secs could wear shades on duty...

██████████ PS needs to work on her saluting technique!

██████████ *Voiceover*

The Permanent Secretary was working hard on her impersonation of Uma Thurman in *Pulp Fiction*...

██████████ "Don't just stand there, let's get to it, strike a pose, there's nothing to it...

"Vogue"

██████████ "There she blows!-there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is Moby Dick!"

Perm Sec's New Year message



08/01/2018

Watch Permanent Secretary Leslie Evans' New Year message to colleagues as she looks ahead to the Year of Young People in 2018.

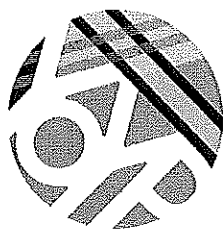
Comments (3)

██████████ It would be good to include a BSL translation (with an in-vision interpreter by the screen), for BSL employees, a food for thought for next time.

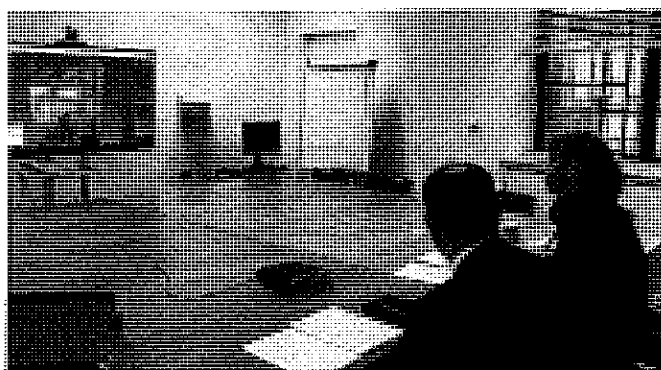
██████████ I concur.

██████████ Thanks ██████████, we're looking into this with your colleagues in the Equality Unit.

Catch up with Perm Sec



year of young people
bliadhna na h-òigridh
2018



15/01/2018

Year of Young People 2018

The Year of Young People is now officially underway. In my role as Senior Government Champion for children and young people during this year, I attended the first Strategic Forum of 2018, hosted by Children in Scotland with stakeholders from 17 organisations around the table.

I shared my intention to be visible in my role, to challenge on behalf of young people, to champion and celebrate their achievements, and to collaborate in order to bring about change – not least to ensure policy meets the needs of children and young people, not the system. Views around the table were that SG has a way to go before it is truly joined up and responsive in policy making and implementation, and we need to be in order to achieve real change and better, sustainable outcomes for children and young people. So 'co-producing' and implementing sustainable policy solutions is vital.

More on YOYP in coming weeks. In the meantime, three questions for all teams:

- 1) How does your work impact on and reflect the needs of young people?
- 2) How can it help improve the lives of children and young people?
- 3) How will you know?

Blavatnik School of Government

As a Fellow of Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government I have asked them to work with us on the next chapter of our National Performance Framework and Outcomes, and the collaborative and collective leadership this entails. Four of us video-linked with Oxford this week to agree how to make best use of their expertise, starting with their attendance at the Scottish Leaders Forum later this month.

ET off-site

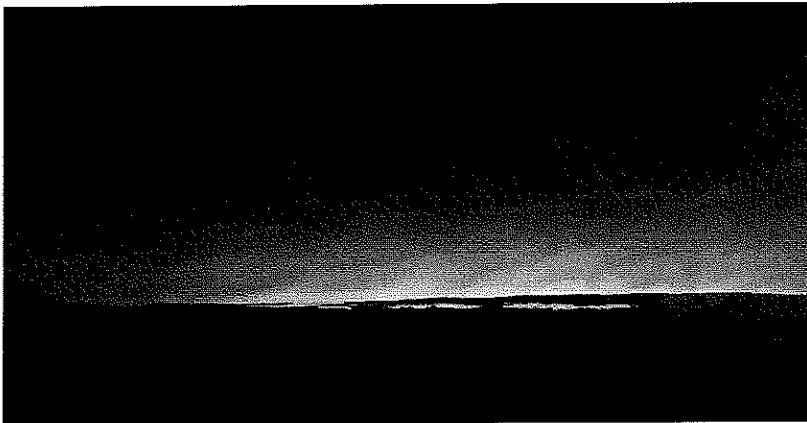
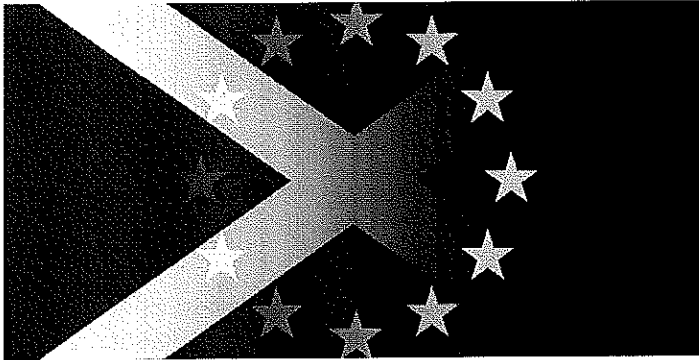
DGs now hold regular off-site sessions to consider senior leadership challenges and organisational change. Last week Alyson Stafford shared her thinking on aspects of her role as DG Scottish Exchequer and her asks of us as leaders, as policy professionals and as a team, to ensure whole government awareness of, and engagement in, the Exchequer function. Alyson's role encapsulates the seismic shift heralded by our new fiscal powers, and the responsibilities and accountability these bring to all of us to secure fiscal sustainability for the future.

Back to business

We're now back into the full rhythm of government business. Many of you will have made a new year resolution. In that spirit I'd like us to pause and set the tone for the year ahead. What helps you to be at your most creative and productive? How do you protect time for your own development? How do you look after your own resilience and that of your team? What habits help – and which hinder?

Comments (0)

Catch up with Perm Sec



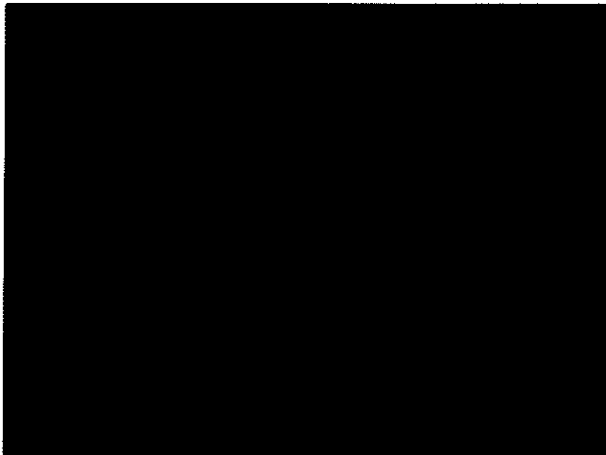
22/01/2018

Scotland's Place in Europe

Last week SG published a piece analysing the economic impact of leaving the European Union and the potential impact on jobs and living standards in Scotland. [Scotland's Place in Europe: People, Jobs & Investment](#) is an important publication and great piece of cross-government work. I encourage everyone to read this report - Scotland's future relationship with Europe is relevant to all policy areas.

In Scotland, more young voters supported Remain than the population as a whole. Leaving the EU will arguably be felt most acutely by younger generations. The Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe has been hearing directly from young people and their representative groups. I'm

Catch up with Perm Sec



05/02/2018

Civil Service in the news

The Civil Service has been in the headlines recently – not a common or comfortable place for us to be. The Civil Service Code demands that we must be honest, impartial, objective and act with integrity in our work for the Government of the day. I witness this behaviour daily by civil servants in the Scottish Government, and in my regular and close contact with the UK Government, and am proud of the high standards to which we hold ourselves.

Youth takeover

There are few voices more powerful than a young person talking freely and unfettered on an issue they care about. Last week I handed over my blog spot to 15 year-old [REDACTED] to tell us about her experience of mental health issues. As an organisation we need more direct and unfiltered contact with young people.

I met recently with Communic18 (the youth group co-designing the [Year of Young People](#)), to hear about their aspirations for 2018. The messages I took away were:

1. Sometimes we just need to "shut up and listen!" instead of approaching everything with a defined agenda.
2. "Challenge is not a hostile act" - and when we dampen our defensive tendencies we can collaborate and respond with more meaning and impact.
3. Get better at 'closing the feedback loop' - informing people we have consulted on what we did and why.

Stonewall – Workplace Equality Index (WEI)

Equality for LGBTI colleagues in our workplace is something I am passionate about. The latest [Stonewall WEI](#) ranked SG at 101 out of 439 participating employers - a drop from last year when we ranked firmly within the top 100 at position 50. We can do better than this - and we must. I welcome Stonewall's challenge for continual improvement and a strong focus on transgender policies and practice. Colleagues are meeting with Stonewall this week to receive detailed feedback on our performance and this will inform future work. We will continue to engage with Stonewall and our LGBTI networks to ensure a supportive and positive workplace for our trans, non-binary and intersex colleagues. This issue is firmly on my radar. I want to see the SG demonstrate our unwavering commitment to equality for all.

Perm Secs away day

Thursday evening and all day Friday was spent with UKG Perm Sec colleagues in London. I gave a pretty frank presentation on behalf of all three devolved administrations about our experience of working with UKG on EU exit and the challenges and opportunities ahead. I look forward to continuing this discussion when I welcome all Perm Secs to [Scotland House](#) in a few weeks. We also considered how the civil service is equipped to respond to a changing world, and where/how we Perm Secs prioritise our precious time together.

Comments (3)

[REDACTED] A picture says a thousand words - 6 women Perm Secs - brilliant!

[REDACTED] Would loved to have heard the frank presentation about our experience of working with UKG on EU exit. Good to learn from one another about how we can get better at that.

[Evans L \(Leslie\) Claire](#) - agree. I am thinking about how best to share this more widely...