

Rebecca McCurdy

JOHN Swinney and Anas Sarwar have been accused of inaction on poverty as new figures reveal a quarter of children in a key by-election constituency live in poverty.

Charity boss Lesley Robertson told The Herald both the UK and Scottish Governments were not doing enough to support vulnerable families.

Mr Swinney will visit her Junior’s Charity today as he campaigns in the Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse by-election, despite its funding being stripped in 2023. Scottish Labour leader Mr Sarwar visited the charity yesterday, accusing the SNP leader of ‘political stunts’ – but signalled his own party’s position on the Scottish Child Payment has changed.

In 2021, he called for the benefit to be increased to £40 per week but he has now told The Herald the welfare approach was “wrong”. It comes as the End Child Poverty Coalition revealed 24.7% of children in the Westminster constituency of Hamilton and Clyde Valley lived in relative poverty.

That constituency includes Hamilton and Larkhall, while the East Kilbride and Strathaven constituency – which has 19.4% of children in poverty – includes Stonehouse.

Big parties are ‘not doing enough’ on child poverty

Ms Robertson told The Herald the “huge” levels of child poverty in the town have only worsened in recent years.

“Our services have grown, and our numbers are sky high – but there is no funding so the impact that has on the charity to be there for the people and make it work, it is incredibly difficult,” she said. “It wasn’t like this when I was growing up but it is one of the most deprived places and it’s absolutely horrendous.” She added the Scottish and UK Government’s were not doing enough to support those in poverty.

The charity supports lone parents and disadvantaged families, offering a weekly food bank, baby bank and other vital services. The Lanarkshire charity learned its Scottish Government funding – issued through the Investing

in Communities Fund – had been pulled and has struggled to stay open.

An SNP spokeswoman said SNP councillors in South Lanarkshire had proposed funding for charities in the budget this year but blamed Labour councillors for voting against it.

She said the government was “providing certainty to charities through the new multi-year fairer funding pilot” and said grants and food payments had helped 20,855 families in South Lanarkshire.

Figures from the End Child Poverty Coalition, calculated using analysis from Loughborough University, found at least one in four children in two-thirds of UK constituencies are still trapped in poverty.

Members of the coalition are among those who joined The Herald last

“It is one of the most deprived places and it’s absolutely horrendous

month in urging Mr Swinney to increase the Scottish Child Payment to £40, and demand the UK Government scraps the two-child benefit cap.

A new report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) also found Scotland may have to spend £920 million a year in benefits to meet its 2030 targets of reducing child poverty to under 10%. It found increasing the Scottish Child Payment – which is given to low income families for every child under the age of 16 – to £40 per week would have the “best poverty reduction impact per pound”.

Meanwhile, Mr Sarwar refused to say whether it remained Scottish Labour’s position for the Scottish Child Payment to be increased. “The financial conditions have to be right, for me,” he said.

Fire risk warning after sunny spring

HOUSEHOLDS are being warned of the fire risks to homes and gardens in the warmer weather, with the UK having seen the sunniest spring on record.

The number of garden fire claims has already been elevated in April and May this year, according to data from insurance giant Aviva, overtaking every other month in 2024.

The insurer said that the average fire claim involving a garden amounts to nearly £16,000.

On Wednesday last week, it emerged that the UK had experienced its sunniest spring on record.

Some 630 hours of sunshine were clocked up across the country between March 1 and May 27, according to provisional figures from the Met Office, beating the previous record of 626 hours set in 2020.

Aviva said that its own fire claims data suggests that an increase in people enjoying their gardens – from barbecuing to having bonfires – could, in part, explain the increase in claims.

The insurer said its data also indicates that lightning claims – which can spark fires by striking a roof or loft space – have increased over the past five years.

Lightning can cause electrical items to break or malfunction, leading to fires in the home.

Research for Aviva, among 2,000 people across the UK found one in eight (12%) people worry more about fire safety during hot weather and 13% worry more during barbecue season.

The research was carried out by Censuswide in December 2024.

Hannah Davidson, senior underwriting manager at Aviva, said: “The warm weather, paired with a lack of rain means that once started, a fire can spread very quickly – particularly as the ground is dry.

“Popular items in gardens, such as wooden fences and sheds, can be flammable, causing flames to spread quickly.”

Big thanks to Sir Boyd



Scotland’s most famous baker, Sir Boyd Tunnock, 92, receiving the Order of Distinguished Auxiliary Service from Paul and Jenine Main, leaders of The Salvation Army in the UK and Ireland, at a ceremony in Bellshill, Lanarkshire, for his dedication to the charity

Calls to legally require supermarkets to reveal ‘shrinkflation’ to customers

SUPERMARKETS would be forced to tell their customers if they want them to “pay more for less” under proposals designed to tackle “shrinkflation”.

The Liberal Democrats want government legislation amended to legally require large supermarkets to inform shoppers when the quantity of goods within a pre-packaged product has decreased thereby

increasing the price per unit of measurement.

Details of the changes would need to be attached or placed alongside the product for a 60-day period, according to the amendment tabled to the Product Regulation and Metrology Bill.

Digestive biscuits, butter, crisps and chocolate bars were among the items found to have decreased in

size while their unit cost increased, according to 2024 research by Compare the Market.

MPs could be asked to vote on the Lib Dem proposal on Wednesday when the Bill returns to the Commons for its report stage.

Lib Dem trade spokesman Clive Jones said: “The scourge of shrinkflation needs to be exposed. “Shoppers have been hammered

during a cost-of-living crisis all while massive companies and big supermarket chains are forcing them to pay more for less to protect their bottom lines.

“They need to be called out on it and for shoppers to know when they are at risk of being ripped off.

“The Government should accept this Liberal Democrat amendment so that we can help protect shoppers

and their already stretched household budgets from another round of shrinkflation.”

The Bill as a whole gives powers to ministers to regulate the marketing and use of goods in the UK after Brexit.

It was previously amended in the House of Lords to provide protections to the imperial pint measure to ease fears over its future.

Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver says dyslexia documentary was ‘most viscerally painful’ thing he has done in life

CHEF Jamie Oliver says a new documentary about dyslexia was the “most viscerally painful” thing he has ever done.

The 50-year old celebrity chef has lived with the learning difficulty all his life and will now present a one-hour documentary on Channel 4 titled Jamie’s Dyslexia Revolution.

The show will dive into the challenges and issues children with dyslexia face in Britain while asking whether the Government can do more to fix the education system. Speaking to the Sunday Times, Oliver said: “I’m unpacking quite a lot of stuff. I thought I’d buried it but it’s hitting a nerve.

“Genuinely, of all the things I’ve ever done, this documentary is the most viscerally painful.”



Oliver has had the learning difficulty all his life

“I’ve seen so many high-flying, talented, grown men cry about this – I’ve just done it to you – the concept of being worthless [when you’re] young is real. It’s really triggering.”

According to the NHS dyslexia is described as a

“common learning difficulty that causes problems with reading, writing and spelling”.

Having left school with two GCSEs, the chef opened up about the challenges he faced, adding that the kitchen “saved” him.

He said: “I didn’t have any extra time in exams, there were no strategies, just a bit of extra tutoring help. There was no robust dyslexic knowledge then.”

He also described feeling “stupid, worthless and thick” and developing “a hatred of words and a total resentment for education” while other students called him a “stupid dunce”, leaving him with a “deep-seated feeling of constantly being behind”.

“I didn’t tell mum, dad or the teachers. I just bottled it up inside. The kitchen saved me. I knew I had something to offer. I knew I wasn’t a useless piece of s**t.”

The Essex-born chef and author is known for hosting cooking shows and documentaries including The Naked Chef and Jamie’s Kitchen

along with publishing a series of cookbooks including Jamie’s 30-Minute Meals.

He has also been an avid campaigner over the years including calling on the Government for greater provisions for healthier school meals and playing a role in imposing a sugar tax on soft drinks.

He is now campaigning for greater support in schools.

Oliver added: “We also need more training for teachers. In a two to three-year training course only about half a day is given to neurodiversity. I’ve only got love for teachers, we need to appreciate them more. But they want to be trained, they want to have the tools to notice, understand and react.”

Jamie’s Dyslexia Revolution is on Channel 4 on June 9 at 9pm.

Pulp’s Cocker says writer’s block ‘led band to grind to halt’

PULP singer Jarvis Cocker said his writer’s block “led the band to grind to a halt”.

The Britpop band, best known for their hit Common People, will release their first album in over two decades, More, on June 6. The frontman, 61, said he wrote the lyrics before going into the studio to “make things easier”.

Speaking to the Big Issue, Cocker said: “It’s weird because

we don’t hang around with each other outside of the band any more, but I was aware of what the others were up to with various projects. But when you’ve made music with people for that many years, you have an unspoken understanding.

“I tried to make things easier by writing my lyrics before we went into the studio, for the first time ever. Because that’s what

kind of led the band to grind to a halt in the first place. It was taking me so long, I just felt embarrassed that the rest of the band were hanging around waiting for me to get my finger out.”

The group split in 2002 but got back together for occasional live performances. They reunited again in 2023, but months before a tour was due to start bassist

Steve Mackey died aged 56. Cocker added: “It sounds a bit crass, but Steve passed away just before our last tour and it made me realise that we only have a finite amount of time to do the things you want to do. And for Steve, it was no longer an option, but it was for us.”

The new album More is dedicated to bassist Mackey and is due to be released on June 6.

PUBLIC NOTICE
LAIRDMANNOCH ENERGY PARK LIMITED
ELECTRICITY ACT 1989
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017

Notice is hereby given that Lairdmannoch Energy Park Limited, ("the Company") with company registration number SC714903, having its registered office at Wind 2 Office, 2 Walker Street, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland, EH3 7LA, has applied to the Scottish Ministers for consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct and operate Lairdmannoch Energy Park on land located northeast of Gatehouse of Fleet and approximately 10km west of Castle Douglas (Central Grid Reference NX 66233 62404). The installed capacity of the proposed generating station would be approximately 100MW comprising of 9 turbines with a ground to blade tip height of 180 metres providing 60MW, ground mounted solar providing 20MW and a battery energy storage system providing 20MW, and associated ancillary infrastructure, for a period of 40 years. The proposed development is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and an EIA Report has been produced.

The Company has also requested a direction under section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 that planning permission for the development be deemed to be granted.

A copy of the application, with a plan showing the land to which it relates, together with a copy of the EIA Report discussing the Company's proposals in more detail and presenting an analysis of the environmental implications, are available for public inspection in person, free of charge, during normal office hours at:

Location	Opening hours	Address
Kirkcudbright Library	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday – 9am to 5pm Wednesday – 1pm to 5pm Friday – 9am to 12pm	Kirkcudbright Library, Customer Service Centre, Daar Road Offices, Daar Road, Kirkcudbright, DG6 4PJ, United Kingdom

The EIA Report can also be viewed on the application website at <https://lairdmannochenergypark.co.uk/> or at www.energyconsents.scot under application reference ECU00004900.

Copies of the EIA Report may be obtained from Wind2 Limited (telephone: 01352 748300, email: info@wind2.co.uk) at a charge of £1,400 per hard copy and free of charge per USB storage device copy. Copies of a short Non-Technical Summary are available free of charge.

Any representations on the application may be submitted by email to the Scottish Government via representations@gov.scot; or by post to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU, identifying the proposal and specifying the grounds for representation.

Written or emailed representations should be dated, clearly stating the name (in block capitals) and full postal address of those making representations. Emailed representations should also include the full return email address of those making representations. Only representations sent by email to representations@gov.scot will receive acknowledgement.

All representations should be received not later than 18th July, although Ministers may consider representations received after this date.

Any subsequent additional information which is submitted by the developer will be subject to further public notice in this manner, and representations to such information will be accepted as per this notice.

Where Scottish Ministers are required to, or decide to exercise their discretion to do so, they can cause a public inquiry to be held.

Following examination of the environmental information, Scottish Ministers will determine the application for consent in one of two ways:

- consent the proposal, with or without conditions attached; or
- reject the proposal

General Data Protection Regulations

The Scottish Government processes representations under the Electricity Act 1989. To support transparency in decision making, the Scottish Government publishes online at www.energyconsents.scot.

A privacy notice is published on the Help page at www.energyconsents.scot. This explains how the Scottish Government processes your personal information. If you have any concerns about the processing of your personal information by the Scottish Government, please email ECconsentsAdmin@gov.scot or write to Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU.