

Think carefully before you vote

The Scottish Elections are on 6th May. **MAKE SURE YOU VOTE** - and think carefully before you do so.

Which Parties have any chance of forming a Government for the next Parliamentary term.

Who are to best placed to seriously take Scotland forward from COVID?

Don't waste your vote on parties that are only there to sow confusion - to settle old scores - to 'self-publicise' - or to focus our thinking on 'single issues'.



If you applied for a Postal Vote, you should have received your ballot paper in the week starting 12 April. Use it!

Don't forget to vote

Public Services workers must not be made to pay for COVID

UNISON and other Unions have called on the UK and Scottish Governments to ensure that all public services are adequately rewarded as we move out of the Pandemic. The Unions insist that Local Government and other public service workers have gone above and beyond normal duties in response to the pandemic – and have kept local services going in the most difficult of circumstances.

Johanna Baxter, UNISON Scotland head of Local Government, said “COSLA has praised their efforts and previously committed to ensuring that issues of reward and recognition would be addressed through the 2021 pay negotiations. We don't believe they have.”



“According to COSLA's own figures 55% of Scottish Local Government workers earns less than £25k per annum – that's over 100,000 workers earning significantly below the average wage of £32,000 per annum. The current offer from COSLA does not address the issue of endemic low pay for these.”

Without public service workers going above and beyond expectations to keep services running over the past year, colleagues in the NHS would have been left without childcare, mortuaries would have been overwhelmed, children would have been left without an education and our elderly would have been left without care. **To date they have received no reward or recognition of their efforts at all. It's simply not good enough.”**

Breaking news

COVID Restrictions

As we finalise copy for this RM News, the Scottish Government has announced some welcome changes to the Coronavirus restrictions.

Most significantly, we'll be able to travel within Scotland beyond our own Local Authority boundaries from Friday 16th April

Organ Donations

The law concerning Organ & Tissue donation, applying to most adults in Scotland changed on March 26th.

For more information about the law change, visit www.organdonation.scotland.org

You should discuss your wishes with your family

Silver Voices update Free TV Licences



There is stalemate in the dispute over the scrapping of free licences for the over 75s and Silver Voices will be doing its best to make it an issue in the coming elections across the UK.

Around 750,000 older people, who previously received a free licence are still refusing to pay, over 8 months on from the date the change was implemented.

The Silver Voices campaign to restore free licences has forced the BBC to agree an unofficial ‘enforcement amnesty’ during which they have promised not to send enforcement letters to those who previously received free licences, or to take action against them.

Silver Voices Director Dennis Reed said “This amnesty, however, does not apply to those who reached their 75th birthday after 31st July 2020. This stalemate cannot continue forever, and 6th May provides a good opportunity to pressure the UK Government to take responsibility for the scrapping of this welfare benefit and to agree a solution with the BBC”.

Dennis has asked supporters to urge their local election candidates to pledge their support for the free TV licences for older people - and to sign the Silver Voices petition on the official Government website to show their support.



“All right, let's get started”

UNISON's 21/22 Scottish Retired Members Committee (SMRC)

The SRMC oversees all Retired Members issues in Scotland. Its 15 members are elected by annual ballot from nominations made by all Scottish branches. The successful candidates in the 2021 ballot are shown right.

Because of COVID, the committee meets ‘virtually’ - on the last Wednesday of each month.

Any Scottish UNISON Retired Member can apply to take part. If you want to join in, e-mail your request to the Scottish RM Secretary Barbara Fulton (babsunison@yahoo.co.uk)

We're saddened by the death of GRAHAM ANDERSON from Glasgow who served on the Committee for a good number of years. Our thoughts are with Graham's family at this sad time

The 21/22 Committee

Gray Allan

Falkirk Branch

Rose Jackson

City of Edinburgh

John Fairley

Clackmannanshire

Barbara Fulton

East Renfrewshire

David Graham

South Lanarkshire Branch

Morag Houston

NHS GGC & CVS

John Hunter

Shetland Branch

Ron Kerr

Dundee City Branch

David Latto

Housing & Care Scotland

Tom Lithgow

Midlothian

Jean McBride

North Lanarkshire

Alicia McColl

Ayrshire & Arran NHS

Gerry McGarvey

Stirling Branch

Jo McLean

Lothian Health Branch

Bob Revie

Aberdeenshire

Munro Ross

Highland LG Braach

TIPS TO AVOID A FRAUD LOCKSMITH



Collectively, respondents attended over 300 botched jobs involving a rogue locksmith over the last year and 65% of respondents said rogues are overcharging customers by £200 or more.

Consumers get in touch every day with tales of unscrupulous activities by people masquerading as locksmiths. At best, rogues will do a sub-standard job or overcharge after initially quoting a cheaper price in a tactic known as bait-and-switch. This type of retail fraud entices consumers by a low price only to be hit with a bill that bears no resemblance to the original quote.

Experience has also told us rogues often display threatening behaviour and have even been known to withhold keys to locks they've fitted. Consumers need to be aware of the dangers and know how to select a reputable locksmith to ensure they don't fall victim.

The Master Locksmiths Association (MLA) is the largest trade body in the UK representing the profession. A Members' survey showed that 66% have been called to a job after homeowners inadvertently called out a rogue locksmith over the past 12 months.

Signs of a rogue locksmith

Five tell tale signs that you're dealing with a rogue locksmith:

- Calls are answered by a call centre which makes it difficult to obtain details for the locksmith doing the job. This can mean you don't know who's doing the work. Jobs are often subcontracted.
- The company is ranked at or towards the top of online advertising listings They may have paid to be there. It isn't an indication about the quality of their work.
- They quote an unusually low price – often advertised online at £39, £49 or £59.
- The locksmith is vague about their experience and may be reluctant to provide feedback on previous jobs or recommendations.
 - 'Drilling is a destructive method of entry and normally used only as a last resort when all other methods haven't worked. Rogues start with the drill.

'Grump' of the week

Some say I'm "grumpy"- but I'm not really!
I cannot be expected just to smile all the time
.... but lockdown has made me blow off
steam from time to time My pet grump
lately - what really gets me going ...

Bicycles - Cycling is great for one's health, - it's the cyclists that create havoc and stress!

Cyclists are known to belt along pavements at top speed. Ordinary mortals who only want to walk are forced onto the road

Bike lights & bells - Not content simply to force you off the pavement they give no warning.

In days gone by, we lived in fear of the Polis catching us on the pavement or out at night without a light. Now, they don't seem to give a monkey's!

Many older folk suffer from some form of hearing loss so can we can't just leap out of the way when faced with an fast approaching



cyclist or group of cyclists (like the Tour de France peleton?).

It should be mandatory for all bikes to have 'working and audible' warning bell. Should all cyclists undergo some form of instruction on a 'bike code'?

I can rant about bikes, but don't start me on those **E-scooters and E-Bikes**. At least cyclists have to put in some effort to frighten the wits out of us. E-Scooters and E-Bikes do it without even breaking sweat!

That's it! I've had my rant and feel better for it! As usual, I've probably upset a few, but as they say in Glasgow, these things, are really "getting on my tits"

What's your favourite rant?

This should ring alarm bells!

Visit the WHICH website for more information on the Locksmith Scams or to sign up to receive the latest scam alerts and advice from Which direct to your e-mail address.

<https://campaigns.which.co.uk/scams/>

It's not all bad ...

'Old folk' tend to be grumpy and it's no surprise that the pandemic, has brought it out. However

Things are definitely improving....

Happily, conversation is on the way back after months of social isolation. Doing my daily walks (when it's not raining) I've picked up a definite sense of optimism. It's great to see old friends waving to each other, smiling and calling friendly greetings ...

"ya right then Jimmy? "

"hud your haircut yet? "

"hud baith yer jags yet? "

"whit jags did ye get? "

"z the wife okay? "

"Ur the weans okay? "

Detailed studies show that young people under 20 are still struggling to communicate - but we understand the University Professors are working to develop a special 'phone Ap' to address the issue. Forecast is that it could be ready before Xmas 2030 and at roughly double any price you want to mention



Stick to the RULES

- **FACE coverings** - you must wear a face mask/covering in all public places
- **AVOID** crowded places
- **CLEAN** your hands thoroughly and regularly
- **TWO-METRE gap** - remember 'social distancing'. Keep a 2metre (6 ft) gap between you and others
- **SELF-ISOLATE** and book a test if you have any sign of symptoms