



Rory Hamilton MSYP Monthly Update (November to February)

Hi everyone,

Welcome to my first regular monthly update. Up until now we've mostly been going through training to get us accustomed to our roles as members of the Scottish Youth Parliament. Between our election in November and now, SYP has supported us with training workshops on how SYP works, including subject committees, our roles as MSYPs and also how to consult with our constituents. We've also had training on policy and public affairs which helped us understand how to create, research and publish the positions that SYP will take. And finally, we were given a short session on social media and communication.

I was also able to attend a couple of Scottish Government consultations for young people on Fair Work and Scotland's Building Heating Strategy, which was attended by co-leader of the Scottish Greens and Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights, Patrick Harvie. These were great opportunities to engage in learning about the current policy environment and also engage in knowledge exchange with my MSYP colleagues.

Now that I have completed my training I should be fully prepared to engage with my

constituents and listen to your views to take them, create policy, and enact meaningful change. Our training has also prepared us to engage with other representatives, decision-makers and organisations who might be able to help us bring about those changes. I'm now confident I can kick on and do this.

In the meantime, as MSYP for Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire I have managed to engage in a number of forums and discussions, as well as championing the interests of young people within those platforms. Firstly, attending regular Area Partnership meetings for Berwickshire and Cheviot, where the involvement of young people in PLACE planning will be important for setting a direction for the area and help understand our local identities.

Secondly, I've held meetings with Councillor John Greenwell about sustainable development which was fruitful in discussing common interest, after which I was invited to join meetings of the Sustainable Development Committee to support other youth representatives in expressing the views of young people on how to support a green future for the Scottish Borders. I have also been in discussion with Councillor Carol Hamilton about mental health services for young people, and I hope to hold a meeting with her soon to assess the current situation further.

The area where I'm pleased to say I've made the most progress in is in climate change. I have been working, partly in my role as Trustee on the Board of Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Services, on a COP26 local event at Ayton Castle on the 17th March. This has involved pulling

together a directory of groups working to tackle climate change in the area under the 'Greener Berwickshire' banner. I hope to attend the day to champion the concerns of young people (expect a consultation survey ahead of this event). Unfortunately the timing might prevent a number of our COP26 local champions from attending, and this is something I will work to rectify for future events. The event offers an excellent to work with more green groups in the future and work towards a better planet. I hope that this will produce more paid and voluntary roles for young people to get involved with. I also aim to produce a 'toolkit' booklet with the help of these groups, to help young people and their families make sustainable choices, and find local solutions. The 'Greener Berwickshire' alliance is an exciting project, and the event in two weeks simply marks the start, and I expect more events, school/workplace visits and workshops on sustainability, along with events open to the wider public, to take place in the near future.

I also held meetings with Liz and Justine at Allanbank Arts to hear about the work they're doing as a social enterprise to support young people in the creative industry, and the opportunities they are providing. It was a great opportunity to learn and I think this will support my aim of providing more meaningful work experience and careers opportunities. I look forward to working with them more. Additionally, I have been working with BAVS/Volunteering Matters to investigate how to provide more opportunities (esp. around engaging young people in third sector activity) and how this might link in with providing meaningful work experience. Early stages just now, but moving in an optimistic direction.

I have joined the Transport, Environment, and Rural Affairs committee at the Youth Parliament, where I am standing to be Convenor, and will champion circular economy, digital connectivity, affordable and sustainable transport, a real Green New Deal, support for young farmers (wellbeing & sustainability), and bringing opportunities to rural areas. I look forward to bringing rural issues to more prominence and working with my MSYP colleagues on developing policy to affect positive change.

Finally, I have started discussions about developing an app for young people to communicate with their representatives, however this is very early stages and I hope by the end of the year I will have something in place. I will likely have more of an update next month.

Upcoming meetings:

- Rachel Hamilton MSP on Friday 4th March
- Scottish Borders Council Sustainable Development Committee on Friday 4th March
- SYP Gathering on Saturday 5th March
- SYP Pop-Up event in West Lothian on 9th March
- Greener Berwickshire on 3rd March
- Greener Berwickshire COP26 Local event on 17th March

As ever, please get in touch with me with your concerns, issues and I will work to see them resolved. Follow me on social media @Rory4ERB, or send me an email at rory.hamilton.msyp@sypmail.org.uk