

Scottish Conservatives encourage Scots back to high streets

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On the day most non-essential Scottish shops are allowed to reopen to the public, the Scottish Conservatives have repeated their commitment to revitalising high streets by encouraging consumers back to support Scotland's retailers.

The Scottish Conservative campaign to Support Scotland's High Streets was launched two weeks ago and called for a major 'buy local' campaign to be organised by the Scottish Government urging Scots to back local high streets.

As Scotland moves from the public health emergency we are undoubtedly facing a significant economic crisis. In April alone total Scottish sales slumped by 40%, an unprecedented nosedive.

Speaking as shops reopen, Jackson Carlaw, Scottish Conservative leader will point out that the Scottish Conservatives will continue to "stand up for people's jobs and livelihoods" and will do everything possible to ensure our economy suffers as little as possible over the course of this crisis.

Scottish MSPs and Councillors will be taking to social media to display campaign posters and their local high street urging Scots to get shopping.

The campaign also calls for:

- Greater support from local authorities, BIDs or the enterprise agencies to facilitate high street shops switching to socially distant trading. Freeing up planning restrictions and licensing along with greater support for BIDs can help achieve this.
- The Scottish Government to bring forward its review of the 2-metre rule. International evidence already exists, and every day counts for businesses: even a few more days' notice on any changes would help.
- Scrapping car parking charges as well as offering pop-up park and ride facilities to help people that will not be able to use a public transport network that is significantly under capacity.
- Sustained cuts to business rates including reducing the large business supplement. Rate relief should be extended for as long as possible.

Jackson Carlaw, Scottish Conservative leader said:

"The reopening of the High Streets is a really positive step for all of us – another big step towards normal life.

"As we move from the public health emergency of Covid, Scotland is undoubtedly facing a significant economic challenge.

"The Scottish Conservatives will continue to stand up for jobs and livelihoods to ensure our economy suffers as little as possible over the course of this crisis.

"Our message is that the Scottish Government must start to revitalise our economy, but so can we – we can get out there and spend money.

"Scottish Conservatives will be out there today, publicly highlighting the great shops we have, and the great people who work in them."