

## **Responding in Challenging Times:**

### **Minister's East Kilbride News Message No 5 - True Value**

I'm sure like me you've been moved by the efforts of Captain Tom Moore, the 99 year old who set himself a challenge of walking 100 times around his garden before his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday to raise money for the NHS. To date he has raised over £26 million, due to generous donations from the public. His story has inspired many and a single he recorded with Michael Ball and the NHS choir has reached number 1 in the charts. But he's not alone, for all round the country people are doing all kinds of things to raise money for charity. Like 90 year old Margaret Payne from Sutherland who is climbing the equivalent of a mountain by simply going up her stairs. She started the challenge on Easter Sunday and expects to complete it by June. And she's raised over £250,000 for NHS charities and her local hospice which looked after her husband before he died.

One of the many things I think this virus has taught us is the value of money. I'm sure every parent wants their child to have an appreciation of what is valuable, and what is not, and surely this period in time is the best lesson ever. Most of our key workers who are keeping this country on its feet right now, are not the highest paid people in our society, in fact, many of them like the care home staff who are currently looking after my mother, are the lowest paid people in our society. I hope that when this period is over, we don't simply go back to how things were, but we start to question how we reward valued people in society.

Life has changed just now in so many ways, and one of the things that made me stop and think for a bit, was when my credit card statement came in. It was a shock, not because it was like the post-Christmas statement when we can't actually believe we've spent so much money, but a shock because the balance was so low. I'm very fortunate to be able to continue to work during this time, but what has changed is the amount of money I haven't spent. I haven't eaten out, or met people for drinks. I haven't been to a shop even for essentials as my husband is doing the shopping, so no picking up some clothes as I buy my bread and milk. It's a sobering thought just how much money I usually spend, so being in a fortunate position, I'm increasing how much I give to charities.

I am aware that this period is going to affect all of us financially for years to come, some people will lose their jobs and families will struggle. But I am hopeful that attitudes to money will change, and we will all be able to discover generosity. If an old man of 99 can inspire people to donate £26 million, we surely as a society are realising people's true value.