

Courts 'write off' more than £5m in unpaid fines

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29 May 2017



More than £5 million in unpaid fines have been effectively written off by the Scottish Courts Service, new research has revealed.

Fines which have been outstanding for longer than three years are “archived” by the organisation, with no realistic expectation they will ever be paid.

And between 2008 and 2013 – the most recent juncture for which a fine can be officially archived – £5,547,358 remains unaccounted for.

That figure does not include unpaid fines accumulated since that date, which the SCS still hopes will be recovered.

In 2012/13 alone, nearly £2 million worth of fines were issued, but have now been written off as more than three years have passed.

The statistics emerged following a Freedom of Information request by the Scottish Conservatives, who said the unpaid penalties were placing additional financial strain on the courts.

The sums are also left out of official unpaid fines statistics, which most recently showed the SCS was waiting for £32.3 million to be paid in penalties, £4.3 million of which was deemed to be “in arrears”, from the last three years.

Scottish Conservative Central Scotland MSP Margaret Mitchell, convener of the Scottish Parliament’s justice committee, said:

“These figures show courts have effectively written off more than £5 million in unpaid fines.

“That sends a completely wrong message to criminals, and creates an impression that if they evade the law for long enough, they’ll get away with it.

“The SNP is increasingly urging courts to turn away from custodial sentences and pursue other options.

“But as it stands, these offenders don’t seem to think they have to comply with alternative punishments, and millions of pounds in fines have gone

unpaid.

“This is also having a negative impact on public finances, and amounts to a huge loss of revenue for the UK taxpayer.”

No surgeries today – Victoria Day!



As today is the Victoria Day holiday, my surgeries will not run this afternoon.

However, I can be contacted at any time on 459378 or at esurgery@frasermacpherson.org.uk.

My Thursday evening surgery at Blackness Primary School this week takes place as usual – details [here](#).

Weekly Road Report – West End Ward



DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL – WEEKLY ROAD REPORT

REPORT FOR WEST END WARD WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY 29 MAY 2017

Riverside Esplanade/Riverside Drive (Tay Road Bridge off ramp to 75m along Riverside Drive) – westbound nearside lane closure for 25 weeks to facilitate V&A construction works.

SSE Glenagnes Cable Renewal – Lochee Road lane restrictions and closures on Blinshall Street, Fleuchar Street and Scott Street for 8 weeks.

Forthcoming Roadworks

Ancrum Road (Charleston Drive to Logie Street) – closed from Monday 3 July for 2 weeks for carriageway resurfacing works.

Theresa May must be straight with the British people on her plans for pensioners, working people and our public services

Labour is today

(Monday 29 May 2017) calling on Theresa May to come clean with the British people and answer the most pressing questions she has failed to be straight about in this campaign.

The Conservative

manifesto has betrayed Britain's pensioners, threatened unspecified tax rises for tens of millions of working people and set out a grim future of underfunding and understaffing for our vital public services.

Given that the

Conservative leader has already broken her flagship manifesto pledge on social care,

we are challenging Theresa May to be straight with voters and give clear answers to the crucial questions she has continued to duck.

Questions

Theresa May must answer today:

1. Will Theresa May confirm that ten million pensioners will lose their winter fuel payments if the Conservatives are re-elected? And if not ten million, how many will it be?
2. At what level will the cap be set on social care costs that those with conditions such as dementia will have to pay under Conservative plans?
3. Will Theresa May match Labour's pledge not to raise personal National Insurance contributions, and not to raise income tax for 95 per cent of taxpayers?
4. Will the Conservatives confirm they are planning another five years of austerity for public services, as the Institute

of Fiscal Studies (IFS) stated last week?

5. The Conservatives have warned they will scrap free school meals for 5-7 year olds if they are re-elected. Will they now spell out a realistic costing for their school breakfast proposal now they have withdrawn their discredited 6.8p figure?

6. Will Theresa May confirm she is proposing not a single penny of extra funding for the NHS, as the IFS has stated?

Theresa May has a track record of breaking her promises, flip-flopping and going back on her word. Ahead of tonight's live televised interview and Q&A, Labour is calling on the Conservative leader to be straight with people and set out exactly what she's planning for our pensioners, working people and school children.

Andrew Gwynne, Labour's National Election Coordinator, said:

"The Tory manifesto has plunged pensioners and working people into insecurity, and left our public services facing the risk of further crisis. Meanwhile, Theresa May refuses to answer even the most basic questions on her policies.

"Today, Labour sets out some of the most pressing questions the Tories keep dodging. So if you get a knock at the door from the Tories or are one of the few people who isn't a Tory party member to meet Theresa May or Philip Hammond, ask them to provide answers.

"Failure to do so will lead people to draw their own conclusions. But ultimately it proves that voting for the Tories at this election is a dangerous roll of the dice for working people and pensioners.

"Their manifesto threatened to take away winter fuel allowances, ditch the triple lock and leave pensioners facing the loss of control of their homes because of social care costs. It makes clear the Tories are planning five more years of austerity for our public services, with no guarantee to not raise taxes for 95 per cent of taxpayers.

"Having broken her flagship pledge on social care just days after she launched her manifesto,

Theresa May needs to give clear answers to these crucial questions and be straight with the British people about what the Tories are actually planning.”

[Recording of the week: Rock Island Line](#)

This week's selection comes from Andy Linehan, Curator of Popular Music Recordings.

‘Rock Island Line’ was the hit single that sparked the [Skiffle](#) craze amongst British youth in the late 1950s. Skiffle was a pared-down mixture of jazz, blues and folk influences played on a mixture of tea-chest bass, washboard, guitars and banjo. Its simplicity made it accessible and appealing to the new generation of British teenagers. Lonnie Donegan’s recording of ‘[Rock Island Line](#)’, an American folk song popularised by Leadbelly, inspired a host of British musicians including Cliff Richard, Jimmy Page, John Lennon and Paul McCartney to form their own groups and laid the foundation for decades of successful British Rock and Pop music.

[Rock Island Line_Lonnie Donegan and his Skiffle Group](#)



The Skiffle phenomenon is the subject of the forthcoming book 'Roots, Radicals and Rockers: how Skiffle changed the world' by musician Billy Bragg.

Follow [@BL_PopMusic](#) and [@soundarchive](#) for all the latest news.