



HOLYROOD UPDATE

From Wendy Alexander MSP

Your constituency MSP for Paisley North



July 2009

News from the Parliament

H1N1 Virus – Swine Flu

With Paisley becoming a hotspot for the virus I have been in regular contact with the Health Secretary and the Chief Medical Officer. I have been pressing for proper lab testing for each possible case rather than mere 'clinical diagnosis' by GPs. I will be keeping up my campaign for the hygiene message to be repeated in every classroom – and free paper hankies to help get the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' message across to our kids.

Climate Change Bill

In the last week of June the Climate Change Bill will complete its Parliament passage to become law.

Scotland, along with the rest of the UK will provide leadership for tackling climate change. Read and watch my recent speech in the Parliament:

<http://www.wendyallexander.co.uk/2009/05/07/wendys-scottish-parliament-climate-change-speech/>

Sexual Offences Bill

The passage of this bill in June deals with the problems of too few rape offences in Scotland either going to trial or resulting in a conviction. When a person is too drunk to say 'yes' or 'no' then there can be no excuse for anyone taking advantage of them sexually. Tightening the law and should also help tackle the low conviction rate.

Repossessions

Over the last year the number of families living in temporary accommodation has risen sharply. Scotland does not have the same level of protection as those living in England. I have been urging the Justice Secretary to meet with Renfrewshire Law centre to discuss rising repossessions locally.

TACKLING KNIFE CRIME

Along with my fellow Labour Members in the Scottish Parliament, I have been calling for the Scottish Government to support mandatory minimum sentences for those who illegally carry or use knives in an attack. Less than a third of those convicted of knife weapons offences actually went to prison last year.

I want to ensure safer communities for the people of Renfrewshire and instil peace of mind that when you are out and about there is no need to feel threatened.

In government Labour doubled the maximum sentence for knife crime and took 13,000 knives off the street in a month's amnesty. Across Scotland last year 55 people were murdered with knives and 1,170 people were admitted to hospital with knife wounds.

These are not just statistics but real people and that is why I am supporting proposals for mandatory minimum sentences for those who illegally carry or use knives in an attack.

These proposals for a Minimum sentence sends a clear, strong message –

carry a knife and go to jail.

I would like to allow the public to show their support for tougher action on knife crime. You can do so by signing my knife crime petition on my website:

<http://www.wendyallexander.co.uk/2009/06/12/crime-petition/>



Devolution 10 Years On

The Calman Commission was close to my heart because I had proposed the Commission 18 months ago. It has worked at break neck speed to deliver a unanimous report on how devolution develops in the future. The proposals will see Scottish politicians become responsible for raising some of the cash they spend and justifying to voters how much income tax they want to raise.

Income tax in Scotland would be reduced by 10p on all rates and the block grant from Westminster would go down correspondingly. Calman also makes a host of other suggestions including the regulation of airguns, drink-driving limits and speed limits being decided at Holyrood.

More in this month's News ...

Apprentices made redundant must get help.

Recent local apprenticeship job losses means over 25 apprentices in training in Renfrewshire have been made redundant since February. Sadly, only 5 of these former trainees have found alternative employment or training programmes - 20 are still looking for work.

I want a dedicated helpline so that any apprentice who is made redundant can get in touch and be helped to find a new training place.

And the Scottish Government must guarantee that any apprentice made redundant will be able to complete their training.

ACCORD Hospice

I was pleased to visit ACCORD Hospice again recently. Increasingly ACCORD treats people with all sorts of diseases not just cancer. I was looking for ACCORD's help. I had a briefing on both the recent Palliative Care Private Member's Bill and also on Margo McDonald's proposed Assisted Suicide Bill. I appreciated ACCORD's long-considered frontline views and was not disappointed in their

straightforward common sense thinking on this difficult matter. ACCORD is a fine feather in Renfrewshire's cap.



Have your say - Law Reform

Scots are being invited to nominate areas for future law reform especially where they feel the current law is unfair or outdated. My message is - speak up now. Top of my own list for law reform is to change unfair factoring laws. Factoring laws provide rules on the maintenance of common areas with costs divided equally among tenants and owner owners or tenants fail to do so. **If you want to nominate a law for change - contact the Scottish Law Commission by 31st July 2009. The consultation website address is www.scotlawcom.gov.uk.**

Renfrewshire bids for share of £60m Town Centre Regeneration Fund



Last year the Scottish Government voted down Labour proposals for a Scottish Town Centre Regeneration Fund. But they have now backed down and agreed to a £60 million fund that could provide desperately needed investment for Paisley town centre.

So after winning this battle for a new government fund to help decaying town centres, I and MP/MSP colleagues have launched a campaign to demand Paisley gets its fair share of the cash.

Renfrewshire Council have put in a bid for £3.7 million of the £60m on offer from the new Town Centre Regeneration Fund.

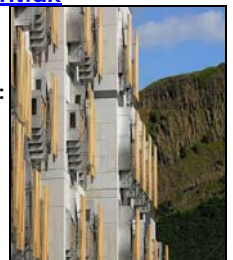
The Paisley Vision Board has been working hard on the bid but the fight has only just begun to make sure Paisley gets its fair share of this government Fund. I believe that Paisley, as Scotland's largest town, should get the largest share of the cash.

This much-needed investment would provide us with the means to enhance Paisley's image, attract people and businesses to the area, boost community pride and revive the local economy.

wendy.alexander.msp@scottish.parliament.uk
www.scottish.parliament.uk
www.wendyalexander.co.uk

Write to Wendy at her constituency office:
Studio 903, Mile End Mill
Abbeymill Business Centre
12 Seedhill Road, PAISLEY, PA1 1JS

Advice Surgeries:
Telephone office on 0141 560 1025 to discuss an appointment.



Working for you in Renfrew, Linwood & Paisley North

To be kept informed of my work in Paisley North and the Scottish Parliament please contact me.
Tel: 0141 560 1025 Fax: 0141 560 1026 Email: wendy.alexander.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

The costs of this publication have been met out of Parliamentary resources.