



BRILLIANT: Wendy, Elizabeth Gardner and her sister inspect one of the kerbs

Shopping's easy thanks to Wendy

A WHEELCHAIR-bound pensioner no longer has to risk her life just to go to the shops, after Wendy Alexander stepped in to help.

Mrs Elizabeth Gardner, from the Renfrew area, told the Paisley North MSP that she had terrible problems negotiating pavements whenever she went out.

To mount the pavement, she had to bump her wheelchair off the kerb then charge at it with considerable speed. It usually worked, but it was far from safe.

Mrs Gardner said: "Every time I wanted to go into Renfrew, it was a struggle to get my wheelchair over the kerbs. Even going to the doctors and the local shops was difficult. I contacted Wendy's office to see if she could help."

"Thanks to Wendy I now have my independence back. A trip to the shops is much easier with the lowered kerbs. I love to go down to Renfrew town centre to meet friends and look round the shops."

Wendy said: "It is wonderful that we managed to help Mrs Gardner keep her independence."



HIGH NOTE: Wendy and education bosses meet some of Renfrewshire's P5 musicians

FREE MUSIC LESSONS FOR ALL PRIMARY FIVES

GOOD things are happening in our schools, as these Primary Five pupils pictured above with Wendy can testify after benefiting for the first time this year from a guaranteed year of free music tuition.

"Music is one of life's pleasures and it is great to see all our youngsters given the chance to learn an instrument," said Wendy.

"I was a pretty poor clarinettist at school, but I learned about music for life and made lots of new friends."

Wendy pointed out that schools are also thinking harder about the health of their pupils.

The Scottish Executive now funds free fruit for all Primary One and Two pupils and is thinking harder about how to combat obesity.

It is now planning an extra PE teacher in every secondary

school by 2007, and every secondary and group of primaries is to have an active school co-ordinator to encourage kids to take part in regular physical activity.

Wendy said: "You might have hated hockey too, but perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our children is knowledge about how to stay healthy. Encouraging fitness of whatever kind should matter more and more in our schools."

Call time on binge drinking

THE new Licensing Bill introduced to the Scottish Parliament designed to tackle binge drinking, has Wendy Alexander's full backing.

The bill also sets a requirement for all licensees to operate on a "no-proof of age, no-sale" basis.

It will give people stronger powers to object before new licences are granted.

And they will be able to call for a review when they believe there are already too many off licences in their area in a bid to have new ones blocked.

Ditch 'sick man' tag for good

THANKS to the bill to ban smoking in public places passed by the Scottish Parliament, there will be smoke-free pubs and restaurants in Renfrewshire from next March onwards.

The bill will also introduce free eye and dental checks by

2007, improve NHS dentistry provision and strengthen the role of community pharmacies.

"Smoking kills 800 people a year in Renfrewshire. This bill will help Scotland finally ditch the 'sick man of Europe' tag," said Wendy.

Wendy Alexander MSP Working for you in Paisley North

Ways to contact Wendy

Write to Wendy Alexander MSP, Mile End, 12 Seedhill Road, Paisley PA1 1JS

Constituency helpline 0141 560 1025

Email wendy.alexander.msp@scottishparliament.uk

Fax Constituency office 0141 560 1026

Advice surgeries Visit Wendy at one of her advice surgeries in Linwood, Renfrew, Paisley or Ferguslie

Serving the people of Linwood, Renfrew and Paisley North



Wendy's advice surgeries

1st Friday of each month
Linwood Advice Works, 4-5pm

2nd Friday of each month
Renfrew Town Hall, 4-5pm

3rd Monday of each month
Constituency office, Mile End,
12 Seedhill Road, Paisley, 4.30-5.30pm

4th Monday of each month
Ferguslie, Tannahill Centre, 4.30-5.30pm

REPRESENTING YOU AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Wendy Alexander MSP

Paisley North, Linwood and Renfrew annual report, 2005



WENDY WINS VITAL CASH FOR HOSPICE

Health board agrees to match community's funds pound for pound



IN THE MONEY: Wendy celebrates ACCORD's funds' boost with James Wardrop, Chairman; Marion Ford, fundraiser; and Alyson Stafford of the local health board

ACCORD hospice, based at Hawkhead Hospital in Paisley, is to receive a vital funds boost thanks to the efforts of Paisley North MSP, Wendy Alexander.

For several years now the hospice has been receiving consistently less of its funding from the local health board.

Wendy has been pressing the board for the money and following a series of meetings with it and ACCORD, an agreement has been reached which will ensure the hospice gets the cash it needs from the health authority.

"Thankfully, health board bosses have listened and as a result of this campaign, in future they will match pound for pound every single penny the local community raises," said Wendy. "This is brilliant news for ACCORD and great news for Paisley."

"Their contribution to ACCORD dropped to just 32% – less than a third of what was needed this financial year (2004/2005). It just was not good enough."

"Now they have promised to raise their contribution to 50% – that is half of all costs within the next two years – and worth hundreds of thousands of pounds to the local hospice."



ON SITE: Wendy with Scotland's Education Minister Peter Peacock and Cllr Jim Harkins

Five fabulous new schools

THE constituency is to get three new state-of-the-art secondary schools by the end of 2007.

This means: a new St Andrew's in Paisley by June 06, a new St Cuthbert's (Linwood) by July 06, and a new Linwood High by December 07."

"We will also see two new primary schools in the area by Christmas 2007 – in Ferguslie and at Woodlands in Linwood."

With this extra cash from the Scottish Executive the council is, at last, reversing decades of national neglect and ensuring Renfrewshire's children will soon enjoy one of the most modern learning environments in Europe."

Almost 30 years ago, Wendy was among the first pupils to attend the new Park Mains High School in Erskine.

She said: "I know from my own experience that a modern school makes it easier for pupils to learn and teachers to teach."

"Children deserve the best. The schools are a sign of our commitment to Renfrewshire and will give our children the best start in life."

A message from Wendy Alexander

PAISLEY NORTH MSP



RENFREWSHIRE'S local economy is on the up. The move of Rolls-Royce to Inchinnan from Hillington, with £90m invested in the new factory, sees the local workforce growing again.

Chivas is another local success story and Glasgow Airport is doing a great job fighting off competition from Edinburgh. Some 2000 more airport jobs are expected over the next 10 years.

Many new waterfront homes are now under construction on the new Renfrew Riverside.

New owners at the Phoenix, Linwood, have ambitious plans, including 1500 new jobs forecast, and a new business park will create jobs around St James' roundabout.

All this growth means we must have better transport links. I have campaigned for the upgrade of the M8, particularly around Junction 26 and for construction of the M74 northern extension, which will relieve the bottlenecks on the Kingston Bridge. The new airport rail-link line should ultimately allow new direct train services from Gilmour Street to Stirling, Edinburgh, and even further afield.

I have campaigned to save the St James' football pitches and for new, modern changing facilities for the players and I am supporting better bus services to Linwood and for a monorail for Renfrew.

I have lobbied for more new affordable homes and they are now coming onstream. Some 140 new homes for rent will open in Shortroods this year and 70 new homes for rent will become available in Moorpark. The campaign to get a sheltered housing complex in Linwood is on the brink of success, with a £3m development planned at Kinnaird Drive. I am also supporting the building of more affordable homes for sale, so local young people can get on to the housing ladder without having to move too far from their family.

Finally, this constituency will have five new schools – three secondaries and two primaries – built in the next two and a half years. This is a campaign I have championed alongside Council colleagues since I was first elected.

Too often politicians talk about what is wrong, so this year I have concentrated my report on what is getting better. Good things are happening in Renfrewshire.

And our efforts to make things even better go on. If you feel strongly about something, do not hesitate to get in touch – there are five ways to contact me printed on the back on this newsletter. And thank you to the hundreds of constituents who do get in touch with me every year.

Best wishes,

Wendy Alexander

CAMPAIGN SECURES NEW HEALTH CENTRE

APETITION organised by Wendy Alexander and signed by more than 1500 residents supporting the campaign for a new health centre for Renfrew has paid off handsomely.

Health Minister Andy Kerr has now given the go-ahead for the centre to be built, proof that campaigning and persistence work.

Wendy is delighted. She said: "Often people think it is not worth standing up for a cause and being heard. But we have fought a campaign for Renfrew for the best facilities and won. This is great news for the area and the many local residents who will benefit."

It took numerous meetings and a lot of hard work, but both Renfrewshire Council and the local health board agreed to a £13m brand new state-of-the-art building incorporating both the health centre and social work offices in Renfrew.

The new centre

THE new facility will replace the existing Renfrew health centre and council social work accommodation for the the area.

It will have enough consulting rooms for all 12 doctors, space for specialist clinics, privacy for



GREAT NEWS: Wendy and Health Minister Andy Kerr, third left, announcing plans for Renfrew's new centre

relatives, and facilities for doctors to perform minor surgery on the premises.

"Better facilities mean better care. This will prove to be a massive weight off the shoulders of the current staff who are doing an exceptional job in the current poor conditions," said Wendy.

The new facility will provide accommodation for a whole range

of new services. It will be able to offer patients

- Physiotherapy suite
- Pharmacy
- Minor surgery
- Community elderly team
- Mental health team

These will be run alongside existing GP services. It will greatly improve the quality of service for patients at a local level. Additional

services, such as speech therapy, the expansion of chiropody, physiotherapy and additional outpatient clinics, will also be available.

"Well done to everyone locally who took part in the campaign for a new centre – your efforts have been properly recognised and we will have the sort of facility the community needs for years to come," added Wendy.



WEAPONS HORROR: Inspector Lennox shows Wendy some of the weapons the police have confiscated from local thugs

Wendy demands action on Scotland's knife-death shame

NEW figures published by the Scottish Executive have shown that knife-related deaths account for more than 50 per cent of all recorded homicides in Scotland.

Wendy Alexander is appalled by this and says something must be done to stop the violence and the misery that it brings to everyone affected by it.

"We saw in Paisley and Renfrew last year, the horror random knife crime can bring. Urgent action is needed to tackle this menace and I am backing measures to crack down on Scotland's knife culture," she said.

"A five-point plan has been outlined which will increase both the powers of the

police and the courts, and will also make it more difficult to buy knives across Scotland."

The plan includes:

- A new licensing scheme for the sale of non-domestic knives
- Increasing the minimum purchasing age from 16 to 18 years
- Banning the sale of swords
- Giving police the power to arrest on suspicion of carrying knives
- Proposals to double the sentence for possessing a knife or offensive weapon from two to four years.

Wendy added: "We know the cost of knife crime here. We need to get tough on it. The current situation is just not good enough."



DELIGHTED: Wendy on board the X6A bus with Iain Wilson of Linwood and Cllr Goldie
On the road again

ASUNDAY bus service from Linwood to Glasgow that had been cancelled has been reinstated, after Wendy Alexander joined forces with the local community.

Anxious Linwood residents contacted their MSP for help when they realised they were to lose the city centre service. Wendy immediately wrote to bus bosses asking them to reconsider the move.

Strathclyde Passenger Transport agreed, telling Wendy that a new subsidised X6A service would be introduced between Linwood and Glasgow by the First bus group. This was reinstated in mid-July, news that was warmly received by local residents.

"I am very pleased that SPT have reinstated the Sunday service for Linwood," said Wendy.



A NAME WITH A VIEW: Margaret Calderwood is congratulated by Wendy Alexander for naming a new park for residents in Renfrew

Renfrew's on the up

MILLIONS are now being spent on developing the Renfrew Riverside. It will turn the area into one of the top places in Scotland to live, work, rest and play.

Wendy Alexander is determined that existing residents gain as many opportunities as possible from the emergence of the new Renfrew.

Three major developments are now under way.

- Up to 2000 new homes will create new opportunities for those wanting to stay or move into the area.
- A new business park should attract thousands of jobs to the Renfrew over coming years.
- And the Xscape leisure complex is due to open in February with an indoor ski slope, a 12-screen cinema, 10-pin bowling and big-name restaurants.

Wendy said: "These plans, plus the new health centre, social work offices and new leisure centre that the town has fought for – mean Renfrew is definitely on the way up."