

## **USE OF PARLIAMENTARY RESOURCES – ANNUAL REPORTS/ NEWSLETTERS**

### **Executive summary**

1. The SPCB is invited to consider whether publications issued by 2 Members during the last parliamentary session meet the guidance on the use of parliamentary resources and external communications.

### **Issues and Options**

2. The SPCB agreed and issued guidance to all Members in November 2009 on the use of parliamentary resources and external communications to ensure consistency on, among other issues, newsletters and annual reports. We received complaints towards the end of the last parliamentary session relating to publications produced and issued by 2 Members claiming that the guidance had been breached.

### **Complaint A**

3. A complaint was made on 24 February 2011 by a former constituency Member about an annual report issued by a regional Member which had been circulated within the former Member's constituency. A copy of the annual report is attached at Annex A for the SPCB's information. The complaint was based on the content of the report, that the report contained the party affiliation of the Member and the timing of issue of the report.

4. Members are entitled to identify their party affiliation provided it is in accordance with the guidance and therefore this part of the complaint has no substance and the complainant has been informed accordingly. The timing of the report was also not an issue as it had been issued prior to the cut off date of 28 February which the SPCB had set.

5. In respect of the complaint about the content our view was that while the majority of the report is compliant with the guidance there were references criticising another political party included in the articles on Post office closures and the Vale of Leven Hospital. Such references are not in accordance with the guidance. In addition, the centre spread promotes more generally and on a national basis the achievements of the Scottish Government. The primary purpose of annual reports and newsletters is to inform constituents about a Member's work.

6. We therefore ascertained the number of reports issued and wrote to the Member advising him that we considered there to be a breach of the guidance relating to the content of the report and seeking repayment of the costs. The Member was also advised that if he did not agree with the interpretation he could seek a view from the SPCB. The Member has asked that the matter be considered by the SPCB.

### Complaint B

7. We received 2 separate complaints from members of the public dated 24 February and 25 February 2011 about an annual report issued by a Member. A copy of the annual report is attached at Annex B for the SPCB's information. The complaints were based on the content of the report being political in both tone and content.

8. The sections of the publication in question relate to the article on the council tax freeze which is alleged to be party political and therefore in breach of the guidance. Concerns were also raised over the strap line "Good News for Central Scotland from the Scottish Government". While much of the annual report is relating to local issues it could be argued that the article on the council tax freeze is more about government policy. This is also the case about the strap line and could therefore be interpreted as a breach of the guidance.

9. It was also claimed that the annual report focuses on only one part of the region from which the Member was elected. We do not consider this element of the complaint has any substance as the member is not restricted in the circulation of such reports, although over the course, as a regional Member and in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Regional MSPs have a responsibility to all those in the region for which they were elected.

10. The Member has asked that the matter be considered by the SPCB.

11. As both Members have asked for the complaints to be considered by the SPCB, the SPCB is invited to determine each matter. A copy of the guidance covering newsletters and annual reports is attached at Annex C to assist the SPCB.

### Resource Implications

12. We are still working on the calculations on the expenditure on the publications and will advise further at the meeting.

## **Governance issues**

13. The guidance provides that Members are responsible for ensuring that the guidelines on newsletters and annual reports are fully complied with. If they have not been, a Member might be asked to repay any costs involved.

14. Section 2 of the Scotland Act 1998 provides that the proceedings of Parliament shall be regulated by standing orders. Rule 1.6 of the Standing Orders provides that Parliament may lay down a code of conduct for members. The provisions of the Code of Conduct have been adopted by resolutions of the Parliament and apply to every member (section 2.1.1). The Code of Conduct therefore has a statutory basis, and section 7.2.11 obliges MSPs to comply with policies and procedures adopted by the SPCB.

15. While in the past Members have been asked to repay in full the costs of any publication where it is deemed that the guidance has been breached, the SPCB might wish to give consideration to repayment of a proportion of the costs where it is considered that any breach is more minor in nature.

## **Publication Scheme**

16. This paper should not be published until such time as the issues have been finalised.

## **Next steps**

17. To notify each Member of the SPCB's decision.

## **Decision**

18. The SPCB is invited to consider and determine:

18.1. Complaint A

18.2. Complaint B

18.4 And determine if there has been a breach whether the costs should be repaid in full or a proportion of the costs.

## PLEURAL PLAQUE



Gil pictured with members of the Clyde-side Action on Asbestos and fellow MSP's Stuart McMillan and Bill Kidd.

Gil came up with the successful strategy to help sufferers of this devastating disease which is caused by exposure to asbestos.

Thousands of sufferers were helped by the Scottish Government in 2009 when it introduced a Bill to compensate victims which received the support of Parliament.

The Bill was introduced to overturn a House of Lords decision in 2007 which ended compensation being paid out to sufferers.



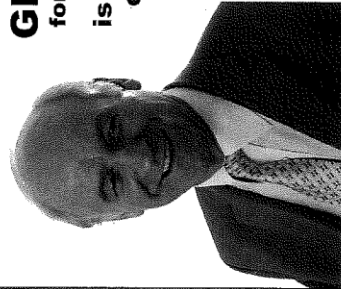
# Gil Paterson MSP

for the West of Scotland (SNP)

# Annual Report

## Surgery Notice

**GIL PATERSON MSP**  
for the West of Scotland (SNP)  
is available for Surgeries  
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(excluding public holidays)



Please telephone for an appointment - stating any special access requirements

Scottish Parliament 0131 348 6812  
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The costs of this publication have been met out of parliamentary resources

Dear Constituent,

For the past four years it has been my privilege to be your MSP, working to create a better and fairer quality of life throughout the West of Scotland.

Together we have tackled many issues and your feedback on surveys and questionnaires has been quite exceptional – thank you for your time and consideration. I hope I have helped many of you achieve your aims and you feel your efforts have been worthwhile.

I can safely say that the high number of responses received and in particular the quality of the information has had a considerable impact which has already brought about, in some cases, a positive result and others are work in progress.

As we are all aware, this is a very difficult time, with jobs and services under threat and families unable to get a home. The most vulnerable in society are paying the price for bankers' greed. This year alone the UK Government has cut £1300million from the Scottish budget and that will be felt across all public services throughout the West of Scotland.

In this Annual Report I have highlighted the many successes the Scottish Government have had since gaining power in 2007, many of which have been played down or overlooked by our heavily-biased media.

For my part, I see my job as your MSP as a work in progress and I assure you of my best attention at all times – my door is always open whenever you need help and advice.

Yours for Scotland,

Gil Paterson MSP

OK -  
Dalmuir

## DALMUIR SEWAGE WORKS ODOUR



Gil handing over the first survey returns to Mike Russell, former Environment Minister.

The odour from the Dalmuir Sewage Works has plagued vast areas of Clydebank for many years. Gil decided the first step should be to consult those 4709 households worst affected. The information gathered from the 1340 households who responded provided evidence and proved the need for Scottish Water to spend multi-millions to rectify the situation.

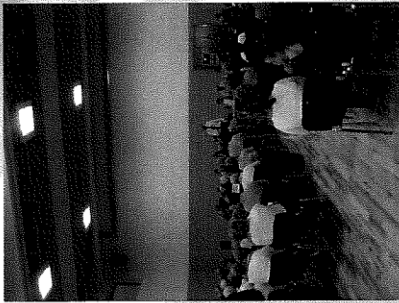
At the end of last year after a considerable amount of work had been carried out and millions spent at the Sewage Works, Gil issued a second survey to those 1071 households who had asked to be kept informed in order to ascertain their views. 85% of those adversely affected responded that there was an improvement or a significant improvement within their home, with the Dalmuir Shopping area scoring the poorest at 77%.



Gil pictured on a visit to the Sewage Works to view the improvements carried out at the plant.

Gil said: "Due to the information gathered from my first survey and help from those in the community, improvements have been made and Scottish Water should be congratulated for taking action. However, I am not treating this as a job complete, more like a work in progress, and I will continue to monitor the situation and listen to your views. Together we can make the difference."

## PROBLEMS CAUSED BY AIRCRAFT NOISE



Gil addressing a packed audience on aircraft noise in Centre 81 in Whitecreek.

The problem of aircraft noise has plagued residents of Clydebank, Milngavie and Bearsden for a number of years and Gil has been fighting an ongoing campaign to have Glasgow Airport regulated in the same way that the three London Airports of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stanstead are.

At the present time BAA Glasgow is self regulated whereas the three London Airports are regulated by the Department for Transport. This results in stricter noise limits, particularly during the evening and night, for those living under the flight paths of the three London Airports than is presently adopted for those who live under the flight path of Glasgow Airport.

Gil previously issued a survey to those 14,723 households in Bearsden, Milngavie and Clydebank who live under the flight path for Glasgow to ascertain how aircraft noise affected them. Of the 5100 households who responded 3055 wanted to be kept informed. At the end of last year Gil surveyed these 3055 households on any health problems that they may have had, or have, which are directly or indirectly caused by aircraft noise.

He wants the Night Flying Restrictions, currently laid down for London Airports, to be extended to Glasgow, an investigation into how we can insulate homes against aircraft noise levels - currently being breached - actual noise measurements to be carried out and a call for compensation for loss of amenity to those living under the flight path.

Gil said: "The most worrying aspect of the survey feedback was those whose sleep is affected by aircraft noise and the effect this can have on their health. The people in this area are just as prone to this as the people of London, so the same protection should be offered to both."



Gil addresses the Rally in George Square in support of St Margaret's.

## St MARGARET of SCOTLAND HOSPICE

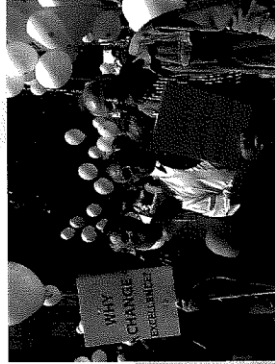
Gil has been spearheading the campaign to save the Hospice since 2007. More than 130,000 people have signed a petition to save this vital facility in Clydebank from closure. He has spoken at numerous rallies, debates in the Parliament and at public meetings to save the Hospice.

He has also formed a close bond with staff, families and supporters within the community who do not want to lose this wonderful place of care which serves the West of Scotland.

Last year he submitted a motion to the Scottish Parliament calling for a cross party summit on the issue. He said: "We have to remove the threat to St Margaret's and by putting our political differences aside we stand a better chance of reversing this decision. This vital facility must not be lost to the community."

The motion rejected the decision by the Health Board to remove funding for 30 continuing care beds at the Hospice.

Gil said: "It is unbelievable to me that the future of St Margaret's should be under threat. Rather than threatening closure, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde should be supporting the Hospice to maintain its excellent record of care to hundreds of patients and families."



Gil pictured with Councillors Jim Brown and Jim Finn at the Rally.

# Here are some of the Scottish Government's many improvements.

Figures quoted are for the whole of Scotland unless otherwise stated.

## Housing

- ✓ 5000 public sector houses have been built providing work for local businesses.
- ✓ 67,000 homes have received advice through the Home Insulation programme.
- ✓ 11,502 homes have benefited from the Central Heating programme.

## Transport

- ✓ Concessionary bus passes for over-60s protected and extended to disabled ex-servicemen.
- ✓ Young Scots National Entitlement card protected.

## Education

- ✓ School building projects completed :-
  - West Dunbartonshire - 6.
  - East Dunbartonshire - 6.
- ✓ 20,000 modern apprenticeships were provided in 2009/10 - 20% more than in 2006/7.
- ✓ Free school meals for most P1-P3 school pupils in Scotland.

## Council Tax Freeze

- ✓ This has saved the average council tax payer:
  - East Dunbartonshire - £239.
  - West Dunbartonshire - £294.

## Health

(Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board.)

- ✓ Inpatient waiting times down to 36 days, a reduction of 10 days.
- ✓ Outpatient waiting times down to 21 weeks, a reduction of 14 weeks.
- ✓ Prescription charges reduced every year and planned to be abolished in April ending tax on the sick.
- ✓ Free personal care for the elderly continued.

## Justice

- ✓ In Strathclyde there are now 588 additional police officers, bringing the force to 8,410.
- ✓ Crime in Strathclyde is down 26%.

## Small Business and Jobs

- ✓ 63,000 small businesses now pay NO rates at all.
- ✓ 11,000 pay greatly reduced rates.
- ✓ Average saving to small businesses £2500, helping protect and create local jobs.

## Recycling

- ✓ The latest available quarterly figures (April - June 2010) show that the Scottish Government has already breached it's target figure of 40%, the local figures are :-
  - East Dunbartonshire - 43.2%
  - West Dunbartonshire - 43.0%.

# Some concerns Gil will be dealing with in the immediate future.

## POSTAL SERVICE

The Postal service is being privatised by the UK Government. This risks Saturday deliveries and threatens the survival of our remaining post offices.

The privatisation plans do not include guarantees to maintain the services we have now. This is another attack on our way of life and will hit those communities who rely on the Post Office for going about their daily business. Gil has campaigned against Post Office privatisation in the past and will continue to do so.

## HIDDEN CUTS

Public services provided by the Scottish Government and Scottish Local Authorities who are still reeling from the cut in the Scottish Grant from Westminster of £800 million, will now effectively face further cuts due to the increase in VAT and National Insurance.

These increases will go straight to the Westminster Government and are therefore a further reduction in the Scottish Grant.

## FUEL PRICES

Most of the price we pay for petrol goes on tax. There seems to be no end to the soaring prices of fuel despite Scotland being a major producer of oil and gas. We have the highest prices in Europe and every fuel rise not only hits the motorist, but the price we pay for food, goods and services.

Gil will support every effort to campaign against this ridiculous and unfair fuel tax imposed by the UK Government.

## HOUSEHOLD HEATING

Linked to the cost of petrol is the soaring cost of heating bills and domestic heating oil. Unfortunately, the Scottish Parliament has little power over energy matters, however, the Scottish Government did help many homes throughout East & West Dunbartonshire with Heating and insulation programmes last year.

## POST OFFICE CLOSURES



Gil with the completed questionnaires collected from hundreds of households.

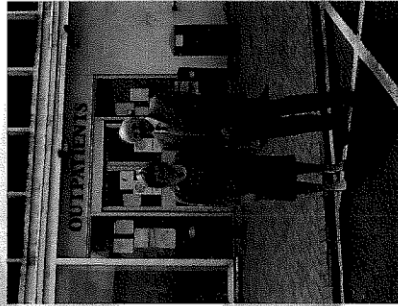
Gil has strongly opposed the closure of Post Offices which he sees as the lifeblood of the community and was appalled at what he saw as the disgraceful actions by the Westminster Labour Government in taking vital services away from the Post Office with the profitable parts gifted to private business.

Shortly after he was elected, the closure of Radnor Park Post Office in Clydebank was announced and Gil consulted all the households affected by the closure. Thousands of replies proved the need for retention but were ignored by the Post Office. However Gil is determined to continue the fight.

## VALE OF LEVEN HOSPITAL

Before the Scottish Government came to power in 2007, the Vale of Leven Hospital suffered death by 1000 cuts from the Labour Party.

Together with Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon, Gil fought a successful campaign to save the hospital for future generations.



Gil pictured with Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon on a visit to the Vale Hospital.

## ALLANDER LEISURE CENTRE

Through his record of promoting the need for health and recreational facilities, Gil has led the campaign to save the Allander Leisure Centre in Mingavie which sits on land which is the subject of negotiations with a housing developer. He has issued a questionnaire which seeks the views of the users directly and has received an overwhelming response against closure of any kind.



Questionnaire volunteers outside the Allander attracted a tremendous response.

Gil has made contact with the numerous groups, clubs and individuals who use the centre on a regular basis and has taken delivery of a letter from the Children of The Allander, a group of youngsters who do not want to see the doors closed. Gil believes this sports facility is a vital part of the community, for young and old alike, and is doing everything in his power to protect it.

Gil said: "Residents should not be deprived of the centre even temporarily. The Allander is the heart of the community for all ages and developers' interests should not come first under any circumstances."

In a letter to the Chief Executive of East Dunbartonshire Council, Gil said: "To lose the facilities at the Allander would be a crushing blow to the residents of Bearsden and Mingavie. This centre is the lifeblood of the community and closure would have a devastating affect on the fitness of children and senior citizens at a time when the need to promote a healthy lifestyle has never been greater."



Gil pictured with Children of the Allander who handed their petition to Councillor Ian Mackay.



## “Council Tax Frozen for another 2 years”

*Alex Neil MSP has welcomed Finance Minister John Swinney's announcement that the Council Tax is to be frozen for another two years.*

Already the council tax freeze which has been in place since 2008 has saved the average Scottish household at least £255. Extending the freeze for another two years until 2013 will save families at least another £170. That means a total saving of at least £425 since the freeze was introduced. That compares to the increase of 45% in the Council Tax in North Lanarkshire which occurred between 1999 and 2008.

Mr Swinney said that hard working Scottish families were suffering enough with increased VAT, rising energy prices and higher inflation at a time when many people were having their wages frozen. To have imposed an increase in the Council Tax at this time would have been too much for many families to bear.

He also announced that the Scottish Government would continue to fund the Council Tax freeze in total so that it wouldn't result in councils losing out financially. This means that no vital frontline services which councils provide need to be cut to pay for the Council Tax freeze, for Central Scotland. The council budget cuts which are happening are the result of the overall

cut in funding provided to the Scottish Government and Scottish councils from the UK Treasury.

Welcoming the extension of the Council Tax freeze, Alex Neil MSP said "The last two years have been exceptionally difficult financially for many families because of the recession and banking crisis. The Scottish Government's decision to freeze the Council Tax for the last three years has been a real help for people striving to cope with increasing pressures on household budgets. To put up the Council Tax, which is an unfair tax, would have been a mistake. I am delighted that John Swinney has decided to freeze the Council Tax for another two years."



### **NEWSFLASH: NEIL AGAINST CHARGES**

As an MSP covering North Lanarkshire Alex Neil is submitting his views to the consultation on parking charges being imposed by North Lanarkshire Council. Alex's submission will point out that what town centres need is investment, not further taxation. Arguing against any parking charges, which could be up to £13 a day, Mr Neil said "Our town centres need investment not taxation. These proposals would be like a wrecking ball to our town centres – shops would be driven out of business as consumers abandon town centres for out of town shopping centres. I will be making my views clear to NLC when the consultation opens and I would encourage others to do likewise."

#### CONTENTS...

Council Tax Frozen for another two years.

Parking Charges

Good News for Central Scotland

New Airdrie-Bathgate Line opened

New Airdrie Health Centre under construction

Making a pitch for Local Football

New Schools

New M8 Link given green light

Crime at a 32 year low

Allanton flooding

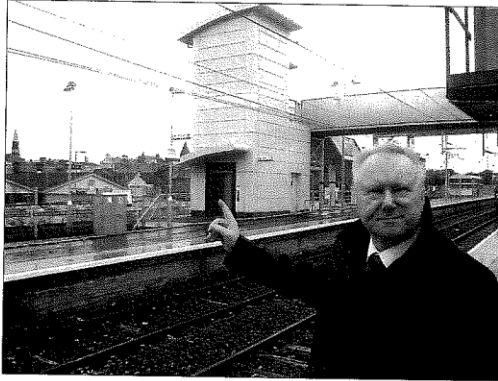


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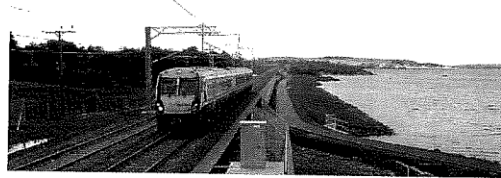
# NEW AIRDRIE-BATHGATE RAILWAY LINE

Alex Neil MSP has been a strong supporter of the new Airdrie-Bathgate railway line for 12 years. He is delighted that the Scottish government supported the £300 million of investment needed to re-open this line, which will put the Airdrie area at the centre of traffic between Glasgow

and Edinburgh. Because of the bad weather the official opening by Scotland's First Minister Alex Salmond had to be postponed until the New Year but despite that the trains are now running.



Mr Neil says "The re-opening of this railway line, along with the upgrading of Airdrie Railway Station and the opening of new stations at Drumgelloch and Caldercruix, will bring much needed new jobs to the Airdrie area. With speeds of up to 90 miles per hour this new service will be a great help in our drive to attract new jobs and industry into the Airdrie area. I am delighted that Network Rail and the Scottish Government delivered this project as it is a real vote of confidence in the future of this area."



## ALEX MAKES A PITCH FOR LOCAL FOOTBALL CLUBS

Central Scotland MSP Alex Neil has been making a strong pitch to various sports organisations for them to invest in local football clubs. Working with numerous local clubs covering the Shotts and Allanton area in particular Mr Neil says that both SportScotland and the Big Lottery are keen to help. He has also spoken to Cashback for Communities organisers to ask them for help too.

Big Lottery and Cashback for Communities are all keen to provide the investment needed to allow these clubs to play locally without having to travel to other football grounds elsewhere to get a decent game.

Mr Neil is chairing a group of local clubs who are working together to secure major investment in the upgrading of pitches and facilities. These clubs include Springhill AFC, Dykehead FC, Allanton FC, Shotts Thistle and Shotts Vics Under 16's. Already representatives of these clubs, along with Mr Neil, have met with the Director of the Big Lottery in Scotland and the Chief Executive and Operations Director of SportScotland. As a result of these meetings a detailed study is now being made of the state of the pitches and facilities available to these clubs. This study will identify what work needs to be done and how much it will cost. The clubs, along with North Lanarkshire Council, will then be able to apply for the funding needed to bring both the pitches and the facilities up to a 21st century standard.

The study should be completed within two months or so and Mr Neil is optimistic that the first wave of investment in local football grounds will happen later this year.

Mr Neil said he was confident that SportScotland, the

He added: "It is ridiculous in this day and age that these clubs can't host games of a high standard because the pitches aren't up to scratch and in many cases the facilities for changing and showers simply don't exist. The people who run these clubs are doing a first class job. They are giving these youngsters the chance to play football and demonstrate their skills. They are also providing an outlet for their energies. It's no secret when young people get the facilities they need to play football the level of anti-social behaviour drops dramatically. That is why securing this investment in these clubs' pitches and facilities is so vital to the whole community, not just the young people themselves."



## GOOD NEWS FOR CENTRAL SCOTLAND

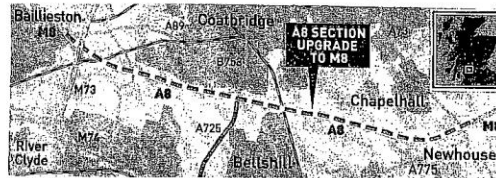
# WORK GETS UNDERWAY ON THREE NEW SCHOOLS

Major works are now under way for three new schools in Airdrie and Coatbridge. The Alexandra and Rochsolloch primaries joint campus has been started as has the new Drumpellier Park home of St Ambrose and Drumpark High Schools. The redevelopment of Caldervale High School is also in the pipeline.

Alex says he is delighted that his constituency features so heavily in the Scottish Government's national school programme of 303 new schools having been substantially rebuilt or refurbished since April 2007. Through the new £1.25 billion Scotland's Schools for the Future Programme the Scottish Government is supporting another 55 new schools. Alex Neil has strongly welcomed this investment in our children's future education.



## New M8 Link given the green light



The Scottish Government has given the green light to upgrading the last non-motorway section of the M8. A dual 3 lane motorway between Chapelhall junction and Eurocentral will be built as part of this project. This project is part of a bigger investment planned by the Scottish Government over the next few years which will include improvements to the M74, M73 and the Raith Interchange.

*"all this investment by the Scottish Government will provide a huge jobs boost for Central Scotland"*

## New Airdrie Health Centre


The people of Airdrie have waited 12 years for a new Health Centre. Alex Neil is therefore delighted that the current Cabinet Secretary for Health Nicola Sturgeon MSP recognised the need for urgency and gave the go-ahead for the new Health Centre.

Mr Neil says "It's great to see the building works progressing on the new Airdrie Health Centre. It brings together numerous surgeries plus council services and new shops, with additional car parking space in the town centre. I am especially pleased that the Scottish Government has just announced an additional £25 million for the Health Service in Lanarkshire next year and that it has guaranteed Airdrie's new Health Centre will be completed on schedule."

AIRDRIE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



**FROM THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT**



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**Surgery Times**  
Alex Neil holds regular surgeries for constituents throughout Central Scotland region.

Please contact the office of Alex Neil MSP (0131-348-5703 or 01698-249000) for details of his upcoming surgeries.



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## Crime at a 32 year low...

With police numbers at record levels in Scotland, crime is now at its lowest level in 32 years. In Strathclyde there are now 588 more police officers than there were 4 years ago. This has helped reduce crime in North Lanarkshire by 11%.

But Alex Neil believes much more needs to be done. He is delighted that the Scottish Government has given priority to fighting knife crime, resulting in a 35% drop in the number of people carrying knives.

Alex Neil is also delighted at the Scottish Government's announcement that it is prioritising Shotts Prison for new investment.



Alex chaired a very successful Pro-social behaviour seminar in Airdrie in January as part of the Airdrie & Coatbridge Advertiser/Strathclyde Police Nae Bother campaign. The event was aimed at reducing the scourge of antisocial behaviour in our communities. Pictured from left are Wendy Scott of the Advertiser, PO Davy O'Connell of Strathclyde Police, Alex Neil MSP, Chief Superintendent Graham Cairns of Strathclyde Police, Community Safety Minister Fergus Ewing and David McNeill from Young Scot.

## Alex demands urgent action to stop Allanton flooding

Alex Neil has called for urgent action to stop the long-term flooding problem which threatens Allanton village. In recent weeks 5 families have had to be evacuated because of underground flooding undermining the stability of their homes. Many other residents fear that their house could be next. Many more are seeing outhouses such as garages and garden sheds starting to crumble because their foundations are being totally undermined by the flooding.

Mr Neil said he was working closely with local tenants and residents to get North Lanarkshire Council, SEPA and the UK Coal Authority to take urgent measures to stop the flooding and to put a permanent solution in place. He said that residents and tenants have been forced to wait far too long for action to be taken, partly because the three agencies involved can't agree on the root causes of the problem and which of them is responsible for getting it sorted.

Mr Neil said that the time for talking was over. It is time for action. The Council, SEPA and the Coal Authority must work jointly to put in place a permanent solution so that the people of Allanton can sleep easily in their beds without worrying about their houses sinking.

Some progress has been made as the Council has now confirmed that work will start on ditching works in Allanton in February 2011.

However the MSP remains concerned that these works will not deal with Artesian water or the red ochre discharge from the abandoned mine workings. He has asked the Council to clarify whether it or SEPA or the Coal Authority is responsible for dealing with these two aspects of the problem so that he can press whichever one it is to stop dithering and get the problem solved.

Mr Neil has also called on the Council to pipe the ditches as this would obviate the need to replace the houses that will inevitably decay and crumble if the deluge from the mine water is not pumped away.

He has also written to SEPA and the Coal Authority to demand that Allanton be included in the Coal Authority's UK Mine Water Remediation Programme as a matter of urgency.



**D. Newsletters and annual reports**

D1. What is the purpose of a newsletter or annual report?

A newsletter or annual report, produced using parliamentary resources, should inform constituents about a Member's work. It can be used to consult with constituents or local groups, or to provide information about how to contact Members.

D2. How should I pay for the costs of my newsletter or annual report?

The costs of a newsletter or annual report including stationery, printing and distribution can be met from the Capped (postage and stationery) Provision, the Office Costs provision of the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme or from both.

Where the newsletter or annual report is being produced externally Members should satisfy themselves that the work has been undertaken to their satisfaction, authorise the invoice for payment and annotate on the invoice whether the costs should be charged to the Capped Provision, the Office Costs provision or specify how it should be split between them.

Members should note that invoices not annotated with payment instructions will be automatically charged to the Capped Provision, provided sufficient resources are available, if not, the remaining balance will be charged to the Office Cost provision.

The invoice should be submitted for payment to the Allowances Office.

D3. How do I identify it as parliamentary publication?

The Parliament's corporate identity **must** appear in any publication. ([Section B](#) provides advice on the use of the corporate identity).

In addition each publication **must** include a note explaining that the costs are met from Parliamentary resources. The wording of such a note, which must be clearly visible, should be as follows:

**'The costs of this publication have been met out of parliamentary resources'.**

D4. Who can receive a newsletter/ annual report?

Parliamentary newsletters and other publications can be distributed to all constituents or a targeted local group, for example residents affected by a development scheme.

Communications should not be distributed outside a Member's electoral area.

D5. Can any political material be included in the same mail drop as newsletters/ annual reports?

No. Parliamentary resources **must not** be used to meet the cost of distributing any non-parliamentary material.

D6. What can be included in a newsletter/ annual report?

Without being too prescriptive the following material can be used in any newsletter/ annual report:

- Information about the Member
- Factual information about Parliament, debates etc
- Details of surgeries and how to get in touch
- Factual material about work undertaken by the Member
- Factual information about local public services e.g. the local authority
- Surveys/questionnaires relating to important local matters

D7. Can I describe myself in a publication as the [party name] MSP?

If a Member wishes to refer to their political party in any communication, they should do so by using the following template to describe themselves:

“[Communication] issued by [Name]  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for [constituency/ region] (party affiliation in brackets)”

D8. Are there any limitations on what can be included in a newsletter/ annual report?

Yes, Members must ensure that newsletters or annual reports do not include any of the following:

- Material that promotes, criticises or campaigns for or against anyone seeking election
- Perspectives, comments or arguments with the intention of promoting the interests of any person, political party or organisation you support, or damaging the interests of any other such person, party or organisation
- Fund raising
- Surveys or questionnaires linked to party political or national campaigning
- Business activities, or to obtain any personal benefit.

D9. What about the content of newsletters and annual reports?

The content of any publication should not seek, directly or indirectly, to compare a Member's party favourably with another, promote one party at the expense of another party or seek to undermine the reputations of political opponents. In this context, the selective use of statistics should also be avoided.

D10. Are photographs permissible?

Yes, but these must not display party campaign slogans or campaign material.

D11. In a publication can I refer to the Government by its party label?

You can refer to the Scottish Government, the Government or the minority Government (as examples), but you should not refer to the Government by party.

D12. Do I require the newsletter/ annual report to be cleared by anyone before it is printed?

No, all newsletters and annual reports should be produced in accordance with this guidance. The responsibility rests with the Member to comply with the guidance.

Should any Member wish to seek advice on the content of any publication to reduce the risk of any complaint being upheld a draft of the publication can be submitted to the Allowances Office for advice **prior** to printing (contact 0131 348 6609). Advice on the use of the corporate identity is available from the corporate publications team (0131 348 5366).

D13. Is it possible to issue a joint newsletter/ annual report with an MP or MEP?

Yes, but Members wishing to produce a joint publication with an MP or MEP must ensure the entire content is free of party political or campaigning material. **Members who wish to include material not allowed under this guidance shall fund the *whole* cost of the publication from another source.**

Members must also be aware that the use of political party logos is not permitted on any joint publication.

D14. What if I want to outsource the printing of any communication?

The outsourcing of printing by a Member to a local firm, for example for any bulk printing of an annual report, is permissible. Members should ensure that they receive value for money when outsourcing any printing and this would normally mean obtaining competitive quotes.

On receipt of an invoice, Members should authorise the invoice for payment and annotate on the invoice whether the costs should be charged to the capped provision, the Office Costs provision or specify how it is to be split.

Members should note that invoices not annotated with payment instructions will automatically be charged to the Capped (postage and stationery) Provision, provided sufficient resources are available, if not, the remaining balance will be charged to the Office Cost provision. The invoice should be submitted for payment to the Allowances Office.

### **Improper use of newsletters and annual reports**

Members are responsible for ensuring that these guidelines are fully complied with. If they have not been, a Member might be asked to repay any costs involved, and may also expose themselves to allegations of misuse of parliamentary stationery.

Members attention is drawn to the Members' Code of Conduct (paragraph [7.2.14](#)). Members are reminded that official stationery and mail is for use only as part of official Parliamentary business. It must not be used for any other purpose, including party political purposes.

### **Enquiries**

Any enquiries on newsletters and annual reports should be addressed to the Allowances Office on 0131 348 6609.