

ALEX'S STANDARD

SERVING CENTRAL SCOTLAND

Scottish Parliamentary Newsletter from Alex Neil MSP, Issue 7, February 2004



Alex Neil MSP

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ALEX SPEAKS IN FINANCE COMMITTEE DEBATE

Alex took part in an important debate on the Scottish budget in the Scottish Parliament in December of last year.

Alex pointed out that he believes the budget process is flawed as it doesn't take account of all revenues raised in Scotland. For example the revenues raised by North Sea Oil are not included, and Alex believes this would make a huge difference. Also, Alex believes that the Treasury in London is allocating expenditure against Scotland as our share of UK expenditure rather than **actual** expenditure in Scotland.

He believes if the real revenue and expenditure was accounted for it wouldn't show that Scotland has £8 billion more spent on it than it contributes to the UK Treasury, but that we in fact contribute £5 billion per year.

In the debate Alex pointed out that if all this money was available to the Scottish Parliament to spend then it could be put to good use to tackle unemployment and end poverty.



Alex recently took part in a walk from Udston primary School to Blantyre Secondary to highlight the long distance that kids will have to walk if Earnock High School closes down. Alex is pictured above with others who took part too. Thanks to the Hamilton Advertiser for allowing us to reproduce the picture.

Surgeries:

Monday 2nd February 2004

(6pm-7pm)
Bellshill Cultural Centre, John
Street, Bellshill

Friday 27th February 2004

(6pm-7pm)
Lilybank Community Centre,
Chapel Street, Airdrie

Monday 1st March 2004

(6pm-7pm)
Bellshill Cultural Centre, John
Street, Bellshill

If you are a member of, or know of any organisation in the Central Scotland area who would like Alex Neil MSP to visit them please get in touch using the contact information on this page.

CONCERN ABOUT KILMARNOCK PRISON

The Prisons Inspectorate recently produced a report into Kilmarnock Prison, the only privately run prison in Scotland based on an inspection that took place back in August of last year. Alex had a number of concerns to do with issues raised in the report. These related to the high turnover of staff at the prison; the number of positive drugs tests; health care in the prison; and access to social work.

Alex has previously highlighted facts and figures that show clearly that the private investment in Kilmarnock Prison hasn't been working. The message that Alex took from the report was clear, that great improvements are necessary at Kilmarnock Prison. He remains convinced that the involvement of the private sector in the running of a prison is not beneficial and that profits and prisons don't mix.

MOTOROLA

Alex recently visited the Motorola Plant in East Kilbride as part of his commitment to visiting major employers across Central Scotland. During the visit Alex met with the site manager Bill Miller and had a full tour of the site. As well as being impressed with the facilities at the plant it was also clear that the company has invested a lot into them and this visit has helped Alex get a better understanding of what they do at the plant.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Alex spoke in the recent debate in the Scottish Parliament on the issue of renewable energy. He called for greater effort to be placed in researching renewable energy sources as this will benefit not only the environment but our economy, as it has the potential to provide many new jobs for people across the country.

SECURE UNIT

Alex has been active in working with the campaign body, the Uddingston and Bothwell Action Group in trying to ensure the most transparent process in the decision where to put the West of Scotland Medium Secure Unit. Alex has had significant concerns about the way in which the process to select this has thus far been run. He, along with other politicians refused to take part in a meeting back in December that was a 'scoring event' to identify a suitable site.

Alex took this decision as he felt local people were not being allowed to contribute to the meeting. There was also another meeting in December that was due to make the recommendation for a site. However this meeting decided to further delay the decision and now local people must wait a bit longer.

ALEX LOOKS INTO FINGERPRINTING PROBLEMS

Alex Neil has been busy of late investigating the important issue of fingerprinting. Alex is concerned that the quality of fingerprinting evidence in Scotland should be of the highest quality. There have been a number of high profile cases of late that have highlighted that sadly this isn't always the case, and the questions Alex have asked have been designed to ascertain why.

It is important that fingerprinting evidence is totally accurate so that no individual shall be wrongly convicted and that the general public can have the utmost confidence in the criminal justice system. There can be no compromise on fingerprinting quality.

Alex's Parliamentary Questions on fingerprinting are numbers:

S2W-3412; S2W-3508; S2W-3629; S2W-4431; S2W-4463; S2W-4464; S2W-4474; S2W-4510; S2W-4549; S2W-4550; S2W-4551; S2W-4601; S2W-4603; S2W-4622; S2W-4623; S2W-4624; S2W-4602; S2W-4932; S2W-5074

All answers to Parliamentary Questions can be found on-line at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/webapp/search_wa

EAST KILBRIDE SCHOOLS

Alex added his name in support of a motion before the Parliament outlining concern about the potential closure of half the secondary schools in East Kilbride (motion S2M-604). This is part of the PPP package that South Lanarkshire Council is bringing forward for their schools. Alex has previously stated his concerns at PPP and this is another specific case that shows its drawbacks as a means to securing investment in public services. For example, if this scheme goes ahead St. Andrews Secondary in East Kilbride which is operating at a fairly high 80% capacity and has a very good record would close. This is why Alex signed the motion.



Alex Neil MSP

Get in touch

Got an issue you want to bring to Alex Neil MSP's attention? Then take a minute to write about it in this box and then cut it out and return to us using the contact information on the other page.

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Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....