

Hepburn at Holyrood

Jamie Hepburn MSP – Serving the People of Central Scotland
Parliamentary Newsletter 13 – Summer 2009



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Parliament has been busy since my last newsletter, with some major pieces of legislation keeping MSPs busy in the Chamber.

There's been plenty of activity across the Central Scotland region, too. In this newsletter

you will find information about some of the campaigns I've been running, including measuring support for new train stations to benefit local communities.

If I can ever be of any assistance to you, my team and I are always ready to help with any issue you might have. Contact details are below, so please feel free to get in touch.

With best wishes,

Jamie Hepburn, MSP for Central Scotland

Special Summer Advice Session for Constituents:

31st July, Cumbernauld Town Hall,
10am – 1pm

Jamie is organising a special advice session for Central Scotland residents on Friday 31st July in Cumbernauld Town Hall from 10am-1pm.

As well as a parliamentary surgery with Jamie, representatives from a range of advice and support organisations will be available to help people with any questions they may have about benefit entitlements, health and social services, and many other issues.

The session is being organised in conjunction with Eaga, a leading provider of residential energy efficiency services. Anyone who lives in the Central Scotland region is welcome to attend, although many of the organisations represented will come from the North Lanarkshire Council area. The session will operate on a drop-in basis, so there is no need to make an appointment.

In association with



Employability Programme in North

Lanarkshire: Jamie visited Airdrie Leisure Centre in March to learn more about North Lanarkshire Council's Employability Programme, which aims to help people into work. Jamie is pictured at the Leisure centre with participants in the sports coaching programme. This followed an earlier visit to the Employability Programme's base in Coatbridge.

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Jamie recently hosted the fourth annual **Amnesty International Media Awards** presentation at the Scottish Parliament. The photo shows Jamie with the winner, Lucy Adams, as well as Val Morgan from SCIAF and John Watson, Director of Amnesty International Scotland. Lucy Adams won the award for her article, The Fight for Justice, published in The Herald Magazine in September 2008 which looked at the use of rape as a weapon of war in conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Jamie met recently with the **Royal Pharmaceutical Society**, who tested his blood pressure while explaining the importance of keeping healthy (left).

He also met with John Cairns, Chair of **Strathclyde Fire Brigades Union** (right) to discuss the union's campaign to reduce the number of firefighter deaths in service in Scotland.



Made in Cumbernauld:

Jamie has written to the new Chairman of Barr's, which makes Irn-Bru, to suggest that Cumbernauld is added to the address given



on bottles and cans of the company's drinks. The address for the company is currently listed as 'Glasgow', but with a Cumbernauld postcode. Cumbernauld has been home to the company's drinks factory since 1996.

Trident, Jobs and Scotland's Economy:

Jamie is pictured meeting with Alan MacKinnon, Chair of the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. SCND has recently published a report into the possible impact of the UK Government deciding to renew the Trident nuclear weapons programme. Jamie has lodged a motion in the Scottish Parliament noting the report's conclusion that 3,000 public sector jobs in Scotland could be at risk if finance for the project is diverted from existing public expenditure as proposed by the Defence White Paper of 2006.



Anniversaries of Cumbernauld Old Parish Church and Kildrum Parish Church: Jamie lodged the following motion in the Scottish Parliament to mark the anniversaries of two of Cumbernauld's oldest churches: That the Parliament congratulates Cumbernauld Old Parish Church on celebrating its 350th anniversary this year; notes that this is a reminder of the long history of Cumbernauld, where there has been a worshipping community since the 13th century; further congratulates Kildrum Parish Church, Cumbernauld, on celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2009; further notes that this is a reminder of the rejuvenation of Cumbernauld as a new town in the 1950s, and wishes the congregations at both churches well for these significant milestones in the life of their churches.

Fun in the Park: Jamie is pictured with his wife Julie at the second annual 'Fun in the Park' day at Cumbernauld Community Park on 31st May 2009. Jamie has been supporting the campaign for the park to be formally designated as a community park. The well attended event coincided with one of the warmest weekends of the year so far, helping to boost attendance and the spirits of everyone present.

Jamie lodged the following motion in the Parliament to raise awareness of the issue: That the Parliament congratulates Friends of Cumbernauld Community Park on the organisation of the second Fun in the Park day, held on 31 May 2009; notes that this highly successful event builds on last year's equally successful Fun in the Park day and follows on from the Walk in the Park event on 26 April 2009, which launched the series of recently constructed pathways through Cumbernauld Community Park; further congratulates Friends of Cumbernauld Community Park for all its endeavours, and hopes that these events hasten the formal designation of Cumbernauld Community Park.



Railway Station Surveys: Jamie has contacted over 10,000 households across the Central Scotland region to determine the level of support for new railways stations at Abronhill and Grangemouth. The overwhelming majority of respondents to both surveys showed strong support for the ideas. Falkirk Council recently debated the prospect of a station at Grangemouth, while the Abronhill station was proposed in the 2000 Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan. Jamie has now sent the results of his survey to the relevant local Councils and transport authorities, and is looking at other ways to take the ideas forward. The results of the surveys are available at www.jamiehepburn.org or by calling Jamie's office on 0131 348 6573/6574. The pictures show Jamie with Grangemouth Cllr Angus MacDonald and Federation of Small Businesses member Tam Smith at the site of a possible Grangemouth Station (left); and looking through some of the survey results with office intern Kim Menage (above).



Town Centre Regeneration Fund: Jamie has been encouraging local authorities and community bodies across the region to apply for assistance from the Scottish Government's £60million Town Centre Regeneration Fund. He has raised the issue in the Scottish Parliament, and recently asked the following questions in the Parliament Chamber:

Jamie Hepburn: "Does the minister agree that the very process of applying for those funds is of benefit to any towns that choose to do so, because it encourages them to think about how their area can best be improved? Does he agree that towns should also seek to build on such plans by identifying a range of funding for growth and regeneration?"

The Minister for Housing and Communities: "I agree with the member entirely. The process helps people to develop a vision for their town centre. I hope that when people make applications they do not just look at individual projects that might qualify for funding but use the opportunity to consider the longer-term vision for their towns and town centres."



Jamie also recently signed a pledge at the Scottish Parliament giving his backing to **Scottish Tourism Week 2009** (above).



Jamie met recently with John Burke, who is Vice-Chair of the **Condorrat Tenants and Residents Association** in Cumbernauld. The Association is a Registered Tenants Organisation, which means it has a legal right to be consulted on certain issues affecting local issues. The group was set up to help promote a high standard of living in Condorrat, and to safeguard, promote and represent the interests of tenants and residents in the area on matters concerning housing, the environment and community life. John holds regular 'Working for Condorrat' drop-in advice sessions for residents at the Pollock Hall, Marie Drive, Condorrat on Tuesday 2pm - 4pm, Wednesday 2.30pm - 4pm, and Thursdays 3pm - 4pm.

Jamie discussed the impact of the economic recession on the **haulage industry** and local businesses during a visit to John Mitchell Haulage and Warehousing in Grangemouth recently. He is pictured next to one of the firm's vehicles along with (l-r) Cllr Angus MacDonald, Managing Director Iain Mitchell, and local Federation of Small Businesses member Tam Smith. Jamie has also signed a motion in the Scottish Parliament calling for more support for the industry during tough economic times.



Royal Mail Part-Privatisation: Jamie led his third Member's Business Debate in the Scottish Parliament on 7th May. The subject was the possible impact in Scotland of the UK Government's plans for part-privatisation of the Royal Mail. Speaking during the debate, Jamie said: "Just last year, I ran surveys which showed massive opposition to the closure of branches in Kildrum, Banton, Queenzieburn, Plains and Grangepans—opposition that went ignored in the face of the UK Government's determination to rid the Post Office of what it saw as burdensome and unprofitable branches... If we look back at the post office closure programme, it all becomes clear: the branches that were deemed to be unprofitable and unattractive to private investors were the ones to be closed... I hope that the UK Government listens to the public, the Scottish Parliament and its own back benchers and scraps its plans to privatise the Royal Mail."

Lanarkshire Youth Counselling Service: this service provides confidential therapeutic counselling for young people of secondary school age in North Lanarkshire. In June, Jamie met with representatives in Airdrie to learn more about the work of the service and the support it provides for young people in the area.



Scottish Environment Week: Jamie met with representatives of various environmental organisations during the annual week to promote care of Scotland's environment. He has also supported the Scottish Government's world-leading Climate Change Bill. The picture (left) shows Jamie with Jenny Mollinson of the Scottish Gardens and Allotments Society.

Mid-Term Report

May 2009 marked the second anniversary of Jamie's election to the Scottish Parliament. The figures below give an idea of just some of his activity since the election until June 2009:

116 Motions Lodged

383 Written Questions Asked

620 Press Releases Issued

Led **3** Member's Business Debates

139 Surgeries Held

4 First Minister's Questions Asked

37 Committee Meetings Attended

Spoke in **43** Debates

13 Oral Questions Tabled

Over **500** people and organisations helped

Homecoming: Jamie recently received a letter from the Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, after writing to him to suggest that residents of the US state visit the town of the same name near Falkirk during the 2009 Year of Homecoming. The Governor sent his best wishes to local residents.

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