



# Stuart McMillan MSP

## Greenock and Inverclyde Constituency

### Newsletter No.2

### October 2016

Welcome to my second newsletter as MSP for Greenock and Inverclyde. It has been a busy time since my last newsletter and I have a lot to update you all on! It is an absolute privilege to serve as MSP for my home community. This newsletter is about informing my constituents about what I have been doing over the past month, but I am interested to know what you have been doing and happy to promote any positive stories in this newsletter so please get in touch!

## The Flitting!

As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, my constituency office was to move to a new location on the 11<sup>th</sup> October. My team and I are now based at **26 Grey Place, Greenock, PA15 1YF**, right in the heart of the constituency. We are on the ground floor which provides much easier access for all of my constituents. I will be having an **official opening on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October at 3pm.**

Derek MacKay MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution will be cutting the ribbon and declaring the office officially open. Please take this newsletter as your invitation to come along next Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> October and help my staff and I celebrate this new beginning for the Greenock and Inverclyde constituency. Tea, coffee and home baking will be available for a small donation to the local foodbank.



## IRH

Since my last newsletter, I have been busy on the subject of the IRH and the proposals to remove the birth facilities from the hospital. On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September I met with the Chairman and Chief Executive of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) to express my concerns regarding not only the proposal to remove the birthing facilities from the IRH, but to remove the paediatric ward from the RAH in Paisley. I called on both to further engage with the local people and I am glad that

my call has been answered. On the 8<sup>th</sup> November, from 4pm till 7pm, there will be a public engagement event in the staff dining area at the IRH. During this time, those in attendance will be able to:

- Listen to a talk from Dr. Margaret McGuire, Nurse Director, on what is being proposed to change and why. The talk will be held at 4.15pm, 5.15pm and 6.30pm.
- Find out what services will not be affected at the Community Maternity Unit.
- Talk to midwives and clinical managers who run the service at the Community Maternity Unit.
- Ask questions and tell them what you think.

I would encourage any constituent who can make it along to do so and make their feelings known regarding these proposed changes. I made further representations when I attended a briefing on the proposed changes at the Gartnavel Hospital on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October and I have a meeting arranged with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport. However, let's not forget, these proposals have been put forward for consultation by a NHSGGC Health Board which includes 7 Labour Councillors and an ex-Lib Dem MSP.

## Eye Health Week – 19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> September



As the Convenor of the Cross Party Group on Visual Impairment, I had the privilege of leading a debate in the Scottish Parliament during this year's Eye Health Week. The World Health Organisation has argued that 50% of sight loss is preventable, and in Scotland we are seeing issues emerging such as an ageing population, increases in diabetes and poor diet potentially contributing to higher levels of visual impairment in the coming years.

The Scottish Government is taking action to prevent this – including continued free eye tests which ensure people from all backgrounds are able to access treatment which can detect a range of sight-threatening diseases.



On Monday of Eye Health Week, I helped at the RNIB Scotland stand in Oak Mall Shopping Centre. My thanks to the Oak Mall Management for allowing the stall and to RNIB Scotland for agreeing to come again to Greenock. We spoke to a large number of people locally and raised the importance of getting eyes tested regularly.

# Brexit

As a member of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, I have been given a unique insight into the confused position of life after Brexit and have been able to scrutinise what experts are saying about Scotland's future outside the EU and also what information the UK Government has provided so far.

Unfortunately, as I'm sure most readers will agree, the UK Government has yet to provide any clear information regarding the UK's exit from the EU. At Holyrood, the Scottish Government has been holding weekly debates regarding all aspects of Brexit, from the effect it will have on education to the effects on the environment, fisheries and agriculture. UK Government ministers are blaming the EU for not giving certainty to UK nationals living in the EU, but they must remember we are the ones who are leaving!

On the subject of education, Scotland is home to nearly 13,500 EU undergraduate students, nearly 5,400 Post Graduate students as well as 4,600 EU staff working in our Higher Education institutions. In anybody's language, that is a valuable economic, social and educational learning contribution to Scotland. Our own West College Scotland has 847 EU students undertaking a wide range of courses.

## Dementia Friends

On Monday [17/10/16], my staff and I became Dementia Friends after receiving an informative training session from Tracy Gilmour, Dementia Advisor for Inverclyde with Alzheimer Scotland. While learning about this condition which affects 1 in 6 people over the age of 80, we were also made aware of the stages of dementia and how it affects everyone differently.

Some people with the condition can live fully functional lives for many years while sadly, others may not cope as well. The main lesson we took from the session was not to make presumptions and not to judge someone by their condition. Anyone or any business looking to undergo the training and become more aware of issues facing people with dementia can contact Tracy by calling 01475 261 102.



## Bull Ring

I recently received a response from Scotland TranServ chief Executive Roy Brannen, confirming that the operating company for the A8 has programmed the replacement of the road markings on the roundabout for the week commencing 24 October. The lane markings have practically faded away and urgently need to be renewed. Mr Brannen also confirmed that, as this area carries a significant amount of traffic during the day, the works will be carried out overnight to minimise disruption to the travelling public.

I very much welcome this news from TranServ. This is good news for those travelling by vehicle in area, allowing for a safer transport system around a heavily-populated precinct. As Inverclyde residents know, the Bull Ring is an extremely busy roundabout and it can be confusing for anyone new to the town to navigate.

## Bag it. Beat it Campaign



I recently teamed up with The British Heart Foundation on West Blackhall Street in Greenock to help promote the Bag it. Beat it Campaign. British Heart Foundation is asking everyone to rummage through their wardrobe and bag up unwanted but good quality clothes, accessories, books, and DVDs to be sold in their shops. Your unwanted items will help to fund the research so urgently needed to protect people from the devastation of heart disease. Around 28,000 women die from a heart attack each year in the UK – that's three every hour. But surveys have shown that women are less likely than men to recognise the symptoms of a heart attack and seek help.

## **Contact details**

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