



**Stuart McMillan MSP**

**Greenock and  
Inverclyde**

**Constituency**

**Newsletter No.3**

**November 2016**

As this is now my third newsletter as the constituency MSP for Greenock and Inverclyde, I hope you are all finding them of use and feel you are being kept up-to-date with my work as your MSP. November has been a tremendously busy month in what has been an extremely eventful year. Below are just some of the things I have been doing and issues I have been raising both locally and in our nation's parliament.

## **Official Office Opening**



Thank you to everyone who joined my staff and I to officially open my new constituency office at **26 Grey Place, Greenock**. Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution Derek MacKay MSP was on hand to cut the ribbon and declare the office officially open. Since moving to our new office, my staff and I have seen a dramatic increase in the volume of correspondence we have received and the amount of people dropping into the office. This is great news and exactly why I wanted to move, not only to make the office more accessible, but to make the office more visible and centrally located right in the heart of the constituency. If you haven't had chance yet to visit the office, please feel free to drop by any time Monday to Friday, 9am till 5pm as we have an open door policy. This is your constituency office and my staff and I are here support anyone in need to assistance and to promote this great area far and wide.

## IRH

This month I have been extremely busy on the IRH front. I had a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport to voice my concerns and the concerns of my constituents over the proposed closure of the birthing unit at the IRH, and also the rumoured changes to both stroke and oncology services. The Cabinet Secretary has since written to me to confirm that she was not even aware of these proposals. She will write to me again after her officials have obtained an explanation from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC).

Furthermore, I attended the NHSGGC briefing at the IRH on the 8<sup>th</sup> November. For a public meeting, it was poorly promoted, poorly attended and held at an inconvenient time. At the briefing session I attended, there were almost as many NHS staff as there were members of the public! However, I did not waste the opportunity to voice my concerns. I want babies to continue to be born in Inverclyde. I understand that due to internationally recognised guidelines, a consultant led birthing unit needs to have at least 2000 births a year. I was informed that there are approximately 1400 births a year from people living in the catchment areas of both the IRH and the Vale of Leven hospital.

However, that does not mean we cannot have a thriving midwife led facility in Inverclyde. I have asked that all options are explored before the final decision is made and last week I wrote to the 7 Labour councillors on the NHSGGC board who will be making this decision asking them to vote to keep the birthing unit at the IRH.

## Scottish Living Wage



This month, my office received its official Scottish Living Wage Accreditation. That means all members of my staff receive at least the new Scottish Living Wage rate of £8.45. The new Scottish Living Wage rate will be a welcome pay rise for thousands of workers across Scotland and in Inverclyde, ensuring that people's basic wage continues to meet the real costs of living.

There are now 12 Scottish Living Wage Accredited employers in Inverclyde across various sectors including retail, care, transport, construction and charities. I would encourage all businesses in Inverclyde to consider becoming Scottish Living Wage employers.

For Inverclyde businesses, paying the Living Wage makes sense – it's an investment in people and all the evidence shows it leads to increased productivity and reduced staff absence and turnover, while sending a strong signal to local customers about fairness.

For more information please visit – <http://scottishlivingwage.org/>

## Trussell Trust

I welcomed the Trussell Trust to the Scottish Parliament this month and co-sponsored the event they held. The Trussell Trust runs a network of over 400 foodbanks, giving emergency food and support to people in crisis across the UK. Unfortunately, figures show that, in Inverclyde, 1097 adults and 320 children were referred for food parcels between April and September this year. Organisations like the Inverclyde Foodbank do an excellent job of providing for those who need it but they should not need to exist. The fact that they even exist is a depressing throwback to Dickensian times – and the Scottish Government is forced to spend £100 million a year mitigating the worst excesses of UK Government welfare cuts. I welcome the Trussell Trust's analysis of these figures which helps us to look at further ways of tackling poverty. In the meantime, I will continue to press the UK Government on welfare support issues at every opportunity.

## 538 Mallard Crescent to Greenock Town Centre

Recently I attend a meeting with McGill's management regarding the future of the 538 Mallard Crescent to Greenock Town Centre bus route. After a positive discussion, McGill's agreed to extend the service for an extra 3 months to see if a long-term solution can be found to keep the service permanently. Hopefully, the next 3 months will see an increase in the use of the service, which would be the best signal to McGill's that local people want this service to stay. I have written to all residents in the area to make them aware of this.



## Singing Children of Africa



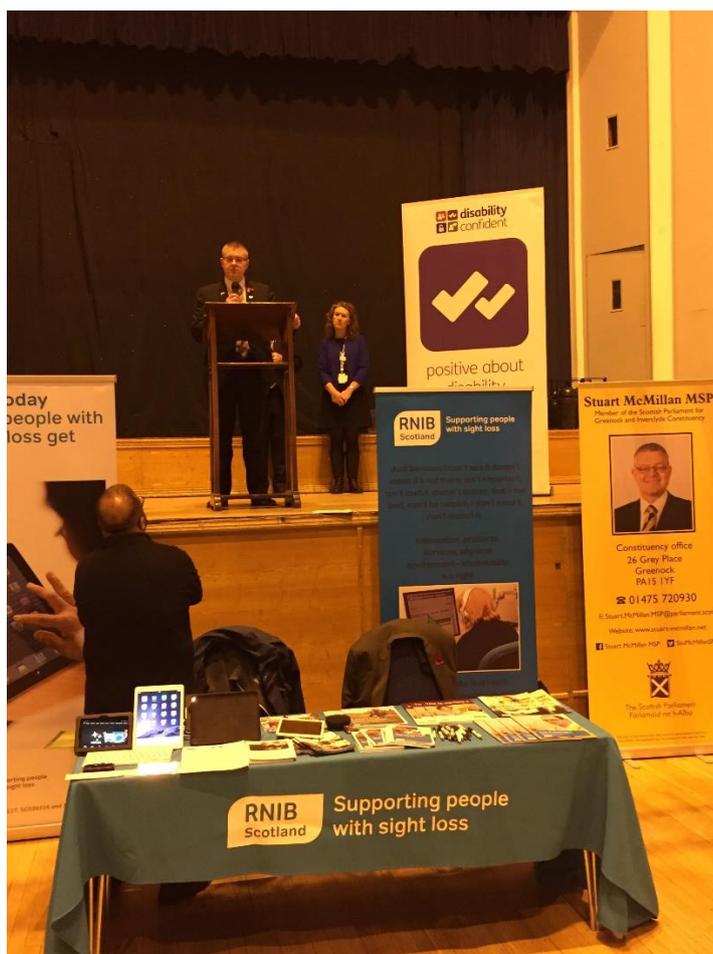
I was delighted to meet up with the Singing Children of Africa when they visited the Scottish Parliament recently. These children are an inspiration and come to Scotland and the UK to raise money to fund schools and hospitals in their home country.

## Disability Confident

On Friday 4th November, Ronnie Cowan MP and I hosted an event in Greenock Town Hall for local employers. The aim of the event was to make employers aware of issues affecting people with disabilities and hopefully encourage them to become more confident about employing people with disabilities.

Unfortunately, all too often people with disabilities find it far too difficult to find a job. This should not happen in this day and age. However, events like this go some way to improving things and the job prospects of many people in our community. I have signed up to the Disability Confident Commitment and I would encourage any local employer who missed the event to get involved and sign up at –

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/disability-confident-how-to-sign-up-to-the-employer-scheme>



## Contact details

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If you wish to visit the Scottish Parliament, receive a tour or even take in First Minister's Question Time, please contact my office and this can be arranged.