

Robert Brown MSP's ANNUAL REPORT IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT



Robert Brown with Charles Kennedy MP and Elspeth Attwooll MEP at Remploy, Hillington

Making the Difference A message from Robert Brown MSP

2005 is the Year of the Volunteer, a year-long celebration of the amazing work volunteers do. I have always been enormously impressed by the huge commitment put in by many people to helping others and making our local communities better places to live. I have a regular programme of meetings with voluntary groups of all kinds - as well as individuals and local businesses.

I believe that it is vital that the Scottish Parliament does everything possible to support voluntary groups.

If you want to contact me on any issue, please call my Glasgow office on 0141 243 2421 or e-mail at robert.brown.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

Best Wishes

Robert Brown MSP



Robert Brown with Guide Dog Kirk and his owner Robert Blackwood

Action for the Environment

Robert Brown has been heavily involved in the campaign to save green spaces and continues to campaign against unsuitable developments. Developers seem to target tennis and bowling greens and, indeed every bit of spare ground in areas like the west end of Glasgow.

Robert said:

"Slowly and steadily, green space in Glasgow is disappearing before our very eyes, largely to provide for housing. No-one is against building much needed new houses-but they should be on brownfield sites wherever possible. We cannot go on cramming more houses into popular areas to the detriment of the quality of life of the local community."

Action for Local Communities

Homeopathic Hospitals

Robert has been a leader of the fight to save the inpatient beds at Glasgow's unique Homeopathic hospital. It remains a mystery why the Health Board should target such a small saving from a successful service for patients who, often, cannot be helped by any other part of the NHS.

Casinos

Robert is strongly opposed to the introduction of regional 'super' casinos in Glasgow and the surrounding areas. The United Kingdom has one of the lowest levels of problem gambling in the world - and it ought to stay that way! Robert's campaign has forced an undertaking from the Scottish Executive that they will have the right to say no to regional casinos in Scotland and that licensing boards may also opt to reject regional casinos in their areas.

Network Rail Masts

The appearance of 100 foot high GSM-R masts on railway lines near to houses has caused upset and outrage across the area. In Burnside, Maryhill and Jordanhill, amongst others, local residents have woken up to find the masts going up with no advance warning or consultation at all.

Amazingly Network Rail require no formal planning permission for these masts. Robert has led calls for a change in the law.

Action on Council Tax

Many people, particularly pensioners, have long suffered from the unfairness of the Council Tax. Now, Council Tax in Scotland is to be reviewed by a committee set up under Sir Peter Burt. This follows a commitment made by the Scottish Executive in terms of the Partnership Agreement.

Glasgow MSP Robert Brown, who was one of the negotiators of the Agreement made in 2003, commented:

"The Council Tax is a very unfair tax. I would like to see it replaced by a system of local income tax, based on ability to pay. This would help many householders, but would particularly benefit pensioners."

Opportunities for Young People

A Unique Opportunity

As Convener of the Parliament's Education Committee, Robert Brown has the opportunity to see the work going on across Glasgow, Rutherglen and Cambuslang to help young people get the best start in life. Robert has visited schools like Stonelaw High School in Rutherglen, St Mungo's in the east end and Hillpark Secondary on the south side. As school rolls fall and teacher number rise towards the 2007 target of 53,000, Robert sees a unique opportunity to cut class sizes and provide more music, drama and sport in schools.



Gaelic Language Bill

The long-awaited Gaelic Bill has recently been examined in detail by the Education Committee. Committee Convener Robert Brown MSP said: *"The Bill will give tremendous encouragement to Gaelic medium teaching, not least in Glasgow. I welcome the announcement of the new all-through Gaelic school in the city."*

For Help and Advice contact Robert Brown MSP

Local Advice surgeries are held by appointment at:

Constituency Office, Glasgow	1st Friday of month, 4pm
Hillhead Library, Byres Road	2nd Friday of month, 4pm
Constituency Office, Glasgow	3rd Friday of month, 4pm
Royal Burgh House, Rutherglen	4th Friday of month, 4pm

Ban on smoking

Robert Brown has strongly supported the ban on smoking in public places, which will particularly help stop young people from getting addicted. Smoking is the single biggest cause of preventable premature death and ill health in Scotland.

Robert said: *"The Health Service in Scotland spends more than £140 million per year on treating people with smoking related illnesses. We must send out the right message to our young people that smoking can seriously damage your health. This is a big step in the right direction."*

Contact Robert Brown MSP- Write to: Parliamentary Office, Olympic House, 142 Queen Street, Glasgow, G1 3BU
Phone: 0141 243 2421 Email: robert.brown.msp@scottish.parliament.uk