

Holyrood Briefing - September 2008

Johann Lamont speaks out

The summer is nearly over - and the Scottish Parliament sits again, with the recess finished.

MSPs' long holidays are sometimes the subject of newspaper comment - what, after all, do we do when we are not in Edinburgh

This month I report on some of the activities I have been involved in - which show that recess is not just one long holiday but, more importantly, that there's a lot going on across the area because people care about their local communities.

It was a privilege to be involved in the opening of **Southside Day Care** in Nitshill.

This nursery is supported by Pollok Enterprise Trust.

If the huge numbers attending the opening are anything to go by, the staff have already built a great relationship with parents and the local community - and the children have great facilities in which to learn and play.

And they managed to get the sun to shine!

I got a warm welcome - and plenty of tough questions - when I met recently with the staff and carers from **Greater Pollok Carers' Centre** at Langton Road.

The support provided - and the real sense of interest and concern for those with caring responsibilities - are inspirational.

It is essential that support for carers like this is fully funded, as it clearly makes a huge difference to carers - old and young alike - who care for their loved ones at such a cost to themselves.

Cardonald and District Seniors' Forum invited me along to talk about the work of the Scottish Parliament and gave me plenty of food for thought about the issues that matter to them - pensions, transport and local facilities.

I look forward to welcoming them on their visit to the Scottish Parliament.

The constituency requires - and is well served by - a whole range of organisations and agencies.

It has been very useful this summer to meet with, amongst others, the police, housing officials, local GPs, Glasgow's new Procurator Fiscal and voluntary organisations, all of whom provide important supports and facilities to the area.

These meetings allow for an important discussion about problems constituents might have - and how these are being tackled.

This contact is probably the most important part of my job in seeking to represent my constituents properly.

BACK THE WORKERS AT YOUR LOCAL BOOKIES

I was delighted to add my support to the campaign by Community union which seeks to highlight the risks faced by betting shop workers.

Increased levels of abuse and robberies faced by staff must give cause for concern.

The campaign calls on the employers to make their premises safer but customers too should take responsibility for showing zero tolerance of those who think that shop workers - whatever kind of shop it is - are there to be shouted at.

I am happy to support Community - a union providing its most important service: standing up for people who are often too intimidated or at risk to stand up for themselves.

POLLOK CIVIC REALM

Things are moving at a pace at the Pollok Civic Realm, with the newly improved health centre and swimming pool, linked by a new library space and offices for the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Pollok Kist, the Stress Centre and nursery available.

I had the privilege of a quick tour of the space.

I am delighted that part of the new building is already in use - with the building being fully active soon.

It looks fabulous - and I am sure it will serve the needs of the community well.

JOBS AT SIEMENS

Along with Ian Davidson MP, I met with trade union representatives and Siemens' management to discuss the possibility of job losses at a workplace which is an important employer in the area.

We sought assurances that the workforce is kept fully informed, that everything possible is done to avoid compulsory redundancies and that proper training and advice is given to those who may have to leave their current post.

We have agreed to maintain close contact with the union and management about this important issue.

THANK YOU

Thanks to all those who invited me to meetings, organised fairs and other events in the area, attended my surgeries or came into my constituency office to meet with me.

It may have been a wet summer - but, across the South West, it has been as interesting and lively as ever.

SURGERIES

Friday 5th September - 2.00pm - Labour Rooms, 996 Mosspark Drive, Cardonald

Saturday 6th September - 10.00am - The Wedge, 1066 Barrhead Road, Pollok

Friday 12th September - 2.00pm - The Wedge, 1066 Barrhead Road, Pollok

Saturday 20th September - 10.00am - Labour Rooms, 996 Mosspark Drive, Cardonald