

# Johann Lamont MSP

Holyrood Briefing – May 2009

## **THE VILLAGE COMES TO HOLYROOD**

I was delighted to welcome the Village Storytelling Centre - which is based in St James' Church in Pollok - to the Scottish Parliament.

As part of the Scottish Parliament's commitment to being open and accessible, local groups and organisations as well as Scotland wide ones can bring exhibitions to the Parliament itself. I was pleased to arrange for the Village to come along for the week.

Their exhibition was very well received and many MSPs commented on the interesting work they do. I was able to bask in a little reflected glory!

Primary 7 pupils from St Monica's also came along to participate in a storytelling session. They were enthusiastic visitors and it made for a very enjoyable day for me.

If you are interested in learning more about the exhibition spaces, do get in touch.

## **SUPPORTING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

A lobby of Parliament by voluntary sector organisations and trade unions has highlighted the difficulties facing the voluntary sector, which provides so many vital services to people across Scotland.

I was pleased to offer my support to their lobby and the demands they have raised in a petition to the Scottish Parliament.

They are especially concerned to close the gap between the pay of people working in voluntary organisations and other public sector workers.

They are also worried about the way in which local councils carry out competitive re-tendering of services which places them and their clients under great pressures.

I am keen to hear from the many voluntary and community groups across the constituency about their experiences and the challenges they face.

## **MOSSPARK ART AND CRAFTS CLUB**

I was delighted to be asked along to an event recently, organised by Mossspark Art and Crafts Club, to celebrate the gaining of a grant from Glasgow City Council of £3,500.

The money has helped the club to purchase tables and other equipment that can be used by its members, especially older members and people with disabilities.

The club wanted to thank myself and Councillor Matthew Kerr for the efforts we had made in getting them the grant.

It is always refreshing to see local initiatives of this kind and to be able to offer them support and help.

### **THE STREET**

I was invited along recently to participate in the opening of '*the street*', an award winning café, in Silverburn.

I was joined by Rangers player Stephen Naismith in wishing success for the new venture.

It has been my ambition from the outset to ensure that there would be business and employment opportunities for local people at Silverburn.

Glasgow South West Regeneration Agency (GSWRA) has played a key role in taking forward that agenda.

I am also delighted to welcome an employer who places such an emphasis on training, especially in these difficult economic times.

### **JOHANN LAMONT SPEAKS OUT**

As part of my ongoing struggle to keep fit and hold the ageing process at bay a little longer, I have signed up for a number of fun run / walk events.

I had the pleasure of participating in the North Glasgow 5k last week, I shall be walking the Women's 10k this month and shall be involved in the Great Scottish Run 10k in September.

I am raising funds for Marie Curie and for the Samaritans and any donations will gratefully be received.

These events are a testimony to the commitment of Glasgow City Council in particular in supporting sporting participation. It is essential that this community approach is sustained if we want to improve the health statistics for our city. And if it puts a spring in my step that's a bonus.

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I was privileged to attend the Scottish Trade Union Congress and to meet James Lillis who won the STUC Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning for his fabulous work in supporting learning in his workplace at First Glasgow.

James, through his voluntary work, has supported migrant workers, many of them from Poland, to cope with their jobs as bus drivers and to become more involved in their local community. James' commitment speaks to everything

that is good about trade unions and trade unionists. We should urge businesses, big and small, to act to support learning initiatives in their workplaces in partnership with trade unions.

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I was also delighted to meet Raymond Kilpatrick who received a Millennium Volunteer Certificate for Excellence, signed by the First Minister, in recognition of his fantastic volunteering commitments in Priesthill.

Raymond, who is in 3rd year at school, was presented with his award at a service in Priesthill Nitshill Parish Church and the pride of everyone there in Raymond's great achievement was wonderful to see.

Both James and Raymond provide us with Inspiration in these difficult times and an important reminder of the generous and thoughtfulness of people across so many of our neighbourhoods.

### **SURGERIES**

Friday 8th May - 2.00pm – Labour Rooms, 996 Mossbank Drive, Cardonald

Friday 15th May - 2.00pm - The Wedge, 1066 Barrhead Road, Pollok

Saturday 16th May - 10.00am – Labour Rooms, 996 Mossbank Drive, Cardonald

Saturday 30th May - 10.00am - Pollok Civic Realm, 27 Cowglen Road, Pollok