

# Stewart Maxwell, MSP

## Representing you in the West of Scotland

### Maxwell Promoted to Shadow Cabinet

West of Scotland MSP Stewart Maxwell was recently promoted from Shadow Deputy Minister for Health to Shadow Sport, Culture and Media Minister. This position now means that Stewart is a member of the Shadow Cabinet.

On his appointment Stewart said,

“I am delighted by this new appointment. Sport is an important part of public health and I hope that I can use my past experience in health to tackle important areas such as child obesity through increased sporting activity and improved sport facilities throughout our

communities and schools. I will continue to strive to ensure that the people of Scotland receive the sports facilities they deserve.

“Culture is in many ways central to the way that we portray ourselves to the rest of the world and I share the disappointment felt by many in the artistic community at the lack of action over the last seven and a half years. In my new role I will be working hard to establish strong links with those who work in the arts and to bring forward policy ideas that will help to grow and strengthen our artistic community.

“It is a time of great challenge in the media

with jobs cuts in both print and broadcast mediums and I will work hard to ensure that the quality and diversity of media in Scotland is maintained. At present the Parliament does not have power over broadcasting and it is clear that we require these powers if we are to protect Scottish broadcasting and allow it to prosper in the future.

“This position brings a lot of new responsibilities and challenges in the Parliament and I will build on the contacts already established by my predecessor to present my ideas on how we can let Scotland’s sport, culture and media flourish.”



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### Police Computer Scandal Continues

In May 2005 Stewart Maxwell uncovered the scandal of the Criminal History System Replacement Project. At that time the project was over one year late and was set to cost £3.3 million.

Stewart has continued to pursue this matter for the last 18 months and has now discovered that the project, originally due to be delivered in March 2004 will not now be operational until June 2007 at the earliest. The original costs which were estimated at £1.5 million

have now soared to £15 million.

Speaking about the latest revelations Stewart said, “A critical police computer system that was due to be operational by March 2004 at a cost of £1.5 million has turned into a complete disaster. The new system, which was originally intended to provide enhanced features will now simply be a like-for-like replacement. In other words, the Scottish government have spent £15 million of tax-payers’ money and taken 7 years to simply stand still.

“Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland stated in the Primary Inspection Report 2004 on the Scottish Criminal Record Office that, “an enhanced Criminal History System.... is vital to the harmonisation of criminal justice in Scotland.” Despite this system being identified as vital to the police it is now clear that even by June 2007 we will still not have that enhanced system. The failure of this project is truly scandalous”.

*Voters Support Scottish Bottled Water*

Yes—150

No—2



## Public Health Campaigns

Stewart Maxwell MSP recently left the post of Public Health spokesperson, but prior to leaving he managed to get many of the items he was working on higher up the political agenda. Stewart said,

“The Parliament’s Petitions Committee is looking at a petition from pupils from All Saints Secondary School on the low cost of alcohol. This is something that I have been examining for some time. I have argued in Parliament for the rigorous enforcement of the laws on under age drinking, an end to using alcohol as a loss leader through the deep discounting of alcohol by the off trade, health and sensible drinking messages on all alcohol adverts and alcoholic products and the removal of alcoholic names, brands and logos from all products for the under 18s.

“I firmly believe that the damage inflicted on Scotland through the abuse of alcohol; at a cost of over £1 billion a year; as well as the impact on our economy, justice system and the nation’s health must be addressed as a matter of urgency. I have pushed for the problem of alcohol abuse to be a top priority for any government and to do so they need to work with: the drinks industry; health professionals; the police and other interested parties to establish a concerted way forward in tackling this problem.

“I have also been campaigning in the parliament for the reduction of the drink driving level and put down a motion to Parliament to reduce the drink driving limit. An average of one in six deaths on Scottish roads is

caused by drink-driving and there has also been a worrying increase in the number of under-21s convicted of drink-driving, up 38% between 1996 and 2002. The current drink-driving limit of 80mg per 100ml of blood is the second highest in Western Europe.

“To assist in reducing the number of people who choose to drink and drive I have supported increased enforcement along with greater education and awareness campaigns. However as the Parliament does not have the power to deal with this issue I have asked the Scottish Government to take this matter up with the UK Government in an attempt to get the issue legislated on as soon as possible.”

## Scotland Needs More All-Weather Pitches

On hearing that Oslo has vastly more all-weather football facilities than Glasgow, a city of similar size, Shadow Minister for Sport, Culture and Media, Stewart Maxwell demanded action. Stewart said: “The results from this study are incredible. Oslo, with 540,000 residents boasts 63 full size artificial pitches; 75 ‘mini’ style artificial pitches. Yet in Glasgow, despite being a slightly larger city, we have significantly fewer all-weather pitches.

“Scotland has some of the poorest health records in the western world and yet we know the health benefits connected with participating in sport. We know that promoting sport would be a pro-active way to help combat this and I believe that Glasgow should try to emulate Oslo in its provision of all-weather pitches.

“Football is our national game and we should be doing everything in our power to inspire the next generation of players. Young boys and girls in

Scotland deserve to be given the best opportunities in life and by actively ensuring we have facilities available 365 days a year come rain or shine, it will show a commitment to ensuring the longevity of our sporting aspirations.

“Glasgow only has 18 full size artificial pitches unlike Oslo which has 63 despite having almost 100,000 fewer people. It is time we were at least as ambitious as Oslo for our sportsmen and women and provided them with all-weather, all year round facilities.”

## Scottish Football

Shadow Sport Minister, Stewart Maxwell MSP put down two motions relating to football recently. One was congratulating Scotland on their magnificent victory over the World Cup Runners-up France. Commenting on this motion Stewart said,

“The magnificent performance by the management, coaches and players on their fantastic victory against France shows that Scotland can more than hold their own in the sporting world. I wish to congratulate the stance taken by the SFA in refusing to go along with the attempts to foist a UK

Olympic football team on Scotland despite the damage this could cause to the very future of a separate Scottish international football team. I stand fully behind the SFA and demand that the British Olympic Association immediately drops its attempt to create a UK football team.

The other motion was on the enormous benefit to Scotland of holding major sporting events, such as the European Football Championships. Stewart said,

“Holding the championships in Scotland would give us the opportunity to promote Scotland on

the world stage. It would enhance the Scottish tourist industry as well as promoting sport and healthy living to the next generation in Scotland.

“However if such a bid is to be successful it will need the combined effort of the Scottish government, the Scottish football authorities and the public and private sectors. If we all work together we can secure the tournament for Scotland. That is why I put down this motion urging the Scottish government to throw its weight behind a Scotland-only bid for the European Football Championships.”