

April 2008

STEWART MAXWELL MSP

Representing you in the West of Scotland

A National Conversation

Don't forget to take part in the National Conversation which allows all of us to debate, reflect and then decide on the type of government which suits us best.

You can find out about the National Conversation by logging onto:

www.anationalconversation.com

And you can take part by email at:

joinin@anationalconversation.com

Or by writing to:

A National Conversation,
Constitution Unit,
G-A North,
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A Winning Team

First Minister Alex Salmond and Minister for Sport Stewart Maxwell met with the Scotland Captain, Mike Blair and Coach Frank Hadden when they brought the Calcutta Cup to the Scottish Parliament after defeating England at Murrayfield.

Stewart said

"I had a great time at the Scotland and England game. There can be nothing better than supporting a team with a strong leader, a sense of purpose and a



determination to do well for themselves and their country. That spirit was clearly there in abundance during the match against England.

I was delighted to get the opportunity to

congratulate the winning Scotland team immediately after the match. However it was a great pleasure to meet up with Mike Blair and Frank Hadden again in the Scottish Parliament and to get the chance to see the Calcutta Cup close up.

Council Tax Freeze Delivered

I am delighted that the recent budget has delivered good news for businesses and good news on the domestic front.

I very much welcome the fact that John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Sustainable Growth, and COSLA have arrived at an historic agreement which means that we will all see our council tax

frozen. This is particularly good news for pensioners and all those who are on a fixed income and helps to make life easier for the people of the West of Scotland.

The new Government came to power promising that council tax would be frozen and despite opposition in the Scottish Parliament it has been delivered and all 32 local

authorities have announced that they will not increase council tax rates.

For small businesses there is also good news. The accelerated removal of business rates will have a significant impact on the economy of the West of Scotland.

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Money to Fight Crime

Kenny MacAskill, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, has launched two exciting new initiatives to tackle crime.

A new, dedicated fund of £200,000 has been created to combat gang culture. The Scottish Government is determined to take action to help those involved in gangs to break out of the cycle of deprivation and despair which such behaviour implies. This new funding will help police and their local partners to deliver workshops

and programmes specifically designed to challenge gang behaviour and these initiatives will be targeted at those young people who are known to be involved in gangs.

We all know that carrying a weapon and being a member of a gang do not offer protection from violence and I am very pleased that money is to be spent which will be aimed at making our vulnerable young people aware of these truths. We will all be safer for this.

The other development is that £3 million of money seized from criminals is to be used to fund a grant scheme for youth projects and youth organisations in all 32 local authority areas in Scotland.

I am particularly pleased that the money which criminals remove from our communities illegally is to find its way back into those communities to benefit our youngsters and to help repair the damage caused by the criminals who prey on our local areas.

Flooding Consultation Announced

I am delighted that my colleague, Mike Russell, Minister for Environment, has launched a consultation on flood risk management in Scotland.

Many parts of the West of Scotland are at risk from flooding. For example, in the Paisley and East Renfrewshire area the Cart bursts its banks causing misery and costing money; and in Dumbarton there is often flooding in the High Street and other areas.

This is an excellent opportunity for those of you who have been

affected by flooding, or those of you who simply hold strong views on the matter, to have your say. The consultation will run until April 22nd 2008 and will be followed, later in the year, by a Flooding Bill in the Scottish Parliament.

I am certain that the Flooding Bill is an opportunity for us to deliver a policy which will make regular flooding in communities, affecting homes and businesses, a thing of the past and I urge you all to participate in the consultation. The consultation can be found at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/02/13095729/Q

and views can be emailed to

Engineering@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk

If you wish to participate in writing then send your letter to:

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